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Teaching Responsibility Through Physical Education:
Research and Applications in Taiwan

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Today’s youth are faced with many negative environmental factors that influence their cognitive, emotional, and social growth (Walsh, 2007). It is essential for physical education programs to play a role in developing students’ positive attitudes and behaviors. Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) is an instructional model for use in physical education in schools and other settings. The model offers a teaching guide for achieving affective, social, and moral goals, and its use has had a profound impact on students’ character development and values. It is also a teaching method for helping students to develop personal and social responsibility (Hellison, 2011). TPSR, developed by Hellison (1995), is valued by practitioners and researchers as a contemporary physical education (PE) curriculum and teaching model. The purpose of this study was to examine the research on using TPSR and other based-responsibility PE curriculum in Taiwan. We searched the TPSR literature to review theoretical concepts, results of international research, and other important findings. This resulted in four meaningful findings: 1. Participants of the studies were mainly adolescents and high-risk students. 2. Qualitative methods were used most frequently in the research. 3. The research focused on long-term longitudinal studies. 4. A model based on a responsibility program was effective in developing students’ responsible behaviors. In this paper, we present research on a TPSR program in Taiwan. We concluded that a TPSR program could enhance students’ character development and social behavior. Implementing and further researching the use of the TPSR program in physical education and sports is recommended.

Key words: Character education, physical activity, affective development.
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Introduction

Today’s youth are faced with many negative environmental factors that influence their cognitive, emotional, and social growth (Walsh, 2007). It is essential for physical education programs to play a role in developing students’ positive attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, character education is an important goal in physical education. Physical education teachers are interested in using sports as a vehicle for developing students’ attitudes, moral behavior, and character. What kind of physical education curriculum and teaching model can improve students’ affective development? One model, Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) through physical activity in schools and other settings, offers a teaching guide for achieving affective, social, and moral goals, and it has had a profound impact on students’ character development and values (Hellison, 1995). It is also a curriculum and teaching model for promoting personal and social responsibility.
Basic concept of Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility

TPSR, developed by Hellison (1995, 2011), is a contemporary physical education curriculum and teaching model that is valued by practitioners and researchers. "TPSR has also become well known internationally and is taught in a number of countries including Ireland, Spain, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand" (Gordon, Thevenard, & Hodis, 2012, p.199). Escartí, Gutiérrez, Pascual, and Llopis (2010) also indicated that TPSR is an alternative model to physical activity curricula. Its goals are to teach personal and social responsibility to at-risk youth who live with poverty, violence, drugs, and family problems.

TPSR is organized around the five levels of responsibility (Hellison, 2011, p. 21). Level 1 is concerned with respecting the rights and feelings of others, self-control, the right to peaceful conflict resolution, and the right to be included and to have cooperative peers. Level 2 involves effort and cooperation, self-motivation, exploration of effort and new tasks, and getting along with others. Level 3 is focused on self-direction, on-task independence, goal-setting progression, and courage to resist peer pressure. Level 4 involves helping others and leadership, caring and compassion, sensitivity and responsiveness, and inner strength. Level 5 is transferring these skills outside the gym, trying these ideas in other areas of life, and being a positive role model for others, especially younger kids.

The goals of level 1 are that pupils learn empathy, self-control, and the ability to solve conflicts peacefully. The goals of level 2 are to develop pupils’ intrinsic motivation and interest in physical activity. The goals of level 3 are to help pupils learn to manage time and to set short- and long-term goals in order to accomplish their plan. The goals of level 4 are to teach pupils how to help others and develop sensitivity and responsiveness. The goal of level 5 is for pupils to apply their positive attitude and behaviors to other contexts in life (Escartí, et al. 2010).

The TPSR model encourages students to use positive social behavior through physical activities such as group discussion, goal setting, and reflection (Hellison, 2003). The framework for implementing TPSR has five daily program format, including relational time, awareness talks, physical activity plans, group meetings, and self-reflection time (Hellison, 2011). Relational time is when teachers attempt friendly communication with as many individual students as possible, sometimes briefly discussing a positive or negative incident that occurred in the last lesson. Awareness talks refer to when teachers bring students together briefly to teach the five responsibilities, beginning with respect and effort, eventually adding self-direction and helping, and later including the transfer of these skills outside the gym. The physical activity plan applies teaching strategies to integrate teaching responsibility with teaching physical activities. Group meetings allow students the time to express their viewpoints about this learning process. Reflection time encourages students to reflect on their attitudes and behavior in relation to their level of responsibilities.

Empirical study on TPSR

Walsh (2007) conducted original research in which youth-development outcomes were compared between participants in an extended-day program incorporating physical activity and those participating in physical activity during their school day. The extended-day program, called “The Coaching Club,” was offered to ten inner-city fourth and fifth graders who attended an elementary school in a large metropolitan city. The program was based on Helicon’s TPSR model. A form of mixed methodology was used, which combined quantitative and qualitative approaches within a single study. The quantitative phase involved the administration of a validated four-point Likert scale questionnaire, which asked participants to evaluate both their Coaching Club experiences and school experiences in relation to nine outcomes that support youth development. The qualitative phase consisted of follow-up interviews with each participant to further illuminate their
perceptions of both experiences. The quantitative results indicated that both kinds of experiences were viewed as supportive of youth development. However, results from the Coaching Club participants provided stronger support on five of the outcomes, and the school-day results provided stronger support on two of the outcomes. There was no significant difference in two of the outcomes. The qualitative results indicated that, overall, participants were supportive of both experiences. Therefore, TPSR is a good teaching strategy to improve students’ positive behavior in a sports club, and the effect of what they learned also influenced students’ behavior in school.

Balderson and Martin (2012) conducted a study titled “the efficacy of the personal and social responsibility model in a physical education setting”. This research examined the effects of Hellison’s TPSR model on individual and class-wide antisocial and prosocial behavior. A multiple baseline behavior analytic design was used to determine the effects of the intervention on students. Results showed a reduction in socially and personally irresponsible behavior in individual students. The Child Social Behavior Questionnaire was also administered to determine the effects of the model on the whole class. A statistically significant difference in scores on the questionnaire was found between the experimental school and a control school at post-test. This study provides quantitative evidence of the efficacy of Hellison’s model on individual and class-wide social behaviors. Therefore, Hellison’s TPSR could help students to improve their attitudes and behaviors and reduce personally and socially irresponsible behaviors.

Hellison developed TPSR in New Zealand, and it has been successfully applied in that country for many years. Recently, Gordon, Thevenard, and Hodis (2011) conducted a study in New Zealand in order to examine the development of TPSR. All New Zealand secondary schools (370) received a 38-item survey examining their use of the TPSR model in their physical education programs. A total of 148 schools (40%) responded, of which 79 reported that they were teaching TPSR in their physical education programs. Teachers indicated that they had high levels of knowledge of and confidence in using TPSR. When exploring how teachers implemented TPSR, it was found that many did not follow the daily program format consistently when teaching TPSR-based lessons; 53% of physical education teachers used TPSR in physical education class, and almost 70% of teachers using TPSR taught it in combination with Sport Education. Most respondents considered the combination highly successful. Teachers generally believed that TPSR-based teaching led to better behaved, more supportive students who were better able to engage in self-directed learning. They also believed TPSR resulted in improved learning in physical education and generated positive outcomes in other areas. Gordon, et al (2011) thought that this was teachers’ teaching self-assessment by themselves. Future research should further assess the effectiveness of this model on students’ practical learning performance.

Other researchers have conducted studies in TPSR. Some researchers implemented TPSR in sport clubs, such as Buchanan (2001), who conducted a study on contextual challenges to teaching responsibility in a sports camp. Walsh, Ozaeta, and Wright (2010) also conducted a study on transference of the goals of a responsibility model to the school environment, and they explored the impact of a coaching club program. Others also implemented TPSR in school physical education classes. For example, Wright and Burton (2008) conducted a study on the implementation and outcomes of a responsibility-based physical activity program integrated into an intact high school physical education class. Wright, Li, Ding, and Pickering (2010) integrated a personal and social responsibility program into a wellness course for urban high school students and later assessed the implementation and educational outcomes. According to this empirical research, four meaningful findings were revealed. 1. Participants of the studies were mainly adolescents and high-risk students. 2. Qualitative methods were used most frequently in the research. 3. The research focused on long-term longitudinal studies. 4. Programs based on a responsibility model were effective in developing
students’ responsible behaviors.

**TPRS in Taiwan**

Empirical research on TPSR has recently been conducted in Taiwan. These studies explored integrating TPSR into traditional methods of teaching physical education, integrating TPSR into a sport education model, and how this sport education model influenced students’ responsible behaviors.

**Study 1: Integrating TPSR into Physical Education Classes: Impact on High School Students’ Personal and Social Responsibility and Prosocial Behavior**

Yang and Chou (2012) conducted a study to investigate the use of TPSR in PE Classes and its impact on high school students’ personal and social responsibility and prosocial behavior. The participants were 10th grade students at a public high school in southern Taiwan. Seventy-two students in two classes participated. One physical education class adopted TPSR and was the experimental group (36 students); the other class taught physical education traditionally, thus serving as the control group (36 students.) The study lasted for 11 weeks. There were two 50-minute classes every week. Research tools included a questionnaire assessing personal and social responsibility and a behavior scale on the prosocial behavior of teenagers. Descriptive statistics and one-way analysis of covariance were used to analyze the data. Research results showed that students in the experimental group scored significantly higher than did those in the control group not only on the overall personal and social responsibility scale but also on its sub-category scores. Furthermore, students in the experimental group scored higher than the control group on both the overall prosocial behavior scale and on subscales measuring school prosocial behavior and fulfillment of their own responsibilities. Both groups scored similarly on common prosocial behavior.

**Study 2: The Influence of the Sport Education Model on Elementary School Students’ Personal and Social Responsibility and Game Performance**

Shu and Pan (2012) conducted a study to examine the effect of two teaching models (sports education model and traditional physical education model) on elementary school students’ personal and social responsibility and game performance. The researchers selected two sixth-grade classes from an elementary school in Taoyuan County as the targets of the study. One of the classes used the sport education model (14 boys and 13 girls) and the other used the traditional teaching model (14 boys and 12 girls). Twenty experimental lessons were conducted in ten weeks. Pre- and post-test results of the Personal and Social Responsibility Questionnaire and the Game Performance Assessment Instrument were then compared. Data were analyzed using a dependent samples t-test and a one-way analysis of covariance as statistical methods. The results were as follows: (a) For the experimental group, a significant difference was found between pre- and post-test results on both the Personal and Social Responsibility Questionnaire and the Game Performance Assessment. (b) For the control group, a significant difference was found between the pre- and post-test results on the Personal and Social Responsibility Questionnaire but not on the Game Performance Assessment Instrument. (c) Regarding both personal and social responsibility and game performance, these results indicated that students made greater progress with the sports education model than with the traditional physical education model. The researchers concluded that the sports education model had a greater influence on personal and social responsibility and game performance than the traditional physical education model did. The long-term course design, provision of sports seasons, and formal competitions provided the students with a more complete learning experience than the previous curriculum had.

**Study 3: The Influence of an Empowering Sports Model on Elementary School Students’ Sense of Responsibility**

Chen and Pan (2013) studied the impact of two distinct teaching models on the performance of
elementary school students in learning responsibility: an empowering sports model and the traditional teaching model for physical education. The research method was a quasi-experimental approach, and elementary-school sixth graders from a single class and students sampled from 10 classes as research participants. The experimental group, which used the empowering sports model, consisted of 16 males and 17 females aged 12.43 ± 0.23 years; the control group, which used the traditional physical education teaching model, consisted of 20 males and 20 females aged 12.42 ± 0.32 years. Twenty classes were conducted over 10 weeks. Pre- and post-test scores on a responsibility scale were used for comparison. In addition, the students’ reflections were recorded to investigate their perceptions of their learning process. Data were analyzed using a dependent samples t-test and a one-way analysis of covariance, as well as other statistical methods, and students’ learning reflections were organized for analysis. The results were as follows: (a) students in the group using the empowering sports model showed significant improvements in learning the responsibility dimensions of self-direction, respect, helping others, and collaboration. (b) Those in the traditional physical education group showed no significant differences in pre- and post-test measures of responsibility. (c) Students participating in the empowering sports model showed superior improvement in the responsibility dimensions of helping others and collaboration compared to those in the traditional physical education group. (d) The students’ level of identification with the teaching methods of the empowering sports model was considerable because the team competitions promoted their learning of responsibility and stimulated individual potential, cultivated collaboration and a sense of respect among classmates, and fostered communication skills and the ability to help others. Therefore, the researchers concluded that the empowering sports model was more effective than the traditional model in helping students learn responsibility.

Study 4: The Influence of the Sport Education and Empowering Sport Models on the Learning Effectiveness of Senior High School Students in Volleyball Curriculum

Gan and Pan (2013) conducted a study to examine the effects of the empowering sports model on the personal and social responsibility and game performance of senior high school students. The study adopted a quasi-experimental research design, and students from two tenth grade classes in a public senior high school in Miaoli County participated. The sports education model was implemented in the control group, consisting of 16 boys and 24 girls with an average age of 15.42 ± 0.42 years. The empowering sport model was implemented in the experimental group, consisting of 18 boys and 20 girls with an average age of 15.99 ± 0.41 years. After 10 weeks of instruction, the pre- and post-test scores of a student responsibility scale and the Game Performance Assessment Instrument (GPAI) were compared. A dependent samples t-test and one-way analysis of covariance, as well as other analytical methods, were used for data analysis and augmented with qualitative data to examine students’ learning process and teacher’s experience in the process of teaching. The results were as follows: (a) the personal and social responsibility and game performance of students in the control group improved significantly; (b) the personal and social responsibility and game performance of students in the experimental group improved significantly; and (c) no significant differences were observed between the groups in the post-test results for these dimensions of the personal and social responsibility scale: diligence, obedience to class regulations and norms, respect for others, helping others, and cooperation. The experimental group had significantly stronger results in the self-direction dimension compared to the control group; however, no significant differences were observed between the game performances of the groups. The following conclusions were drawn: (a) Both the sport education and empowering sport models enhanced students’ learning with regard to personal and social
responsibility and game performance. However, the empowering sport model more strongly affected self-direction than the sport education model did. (b) The empowering sport model reduced opposition among teams during intense competitions, facilitated classroom management, and enhanced educational effects for affective learning; it did not cause significant differences in game performance.

To further build on these empirical studies of TPSR in Taiwan, researchers should compare the effects of integrating TPSR into a traditional teaching model and a sport education model. It is important to understand the effect on learning when TPSR is integrated in different curricula and teaching models. Generally, the effect on learning responsibility is better when integrating TPSR into the sport education model. Because the sport education model is a cooperative learning approach, it will contribute to the development of students’ personal and social responsibility.

**Conclusion**

Physical education curriculum has four key objectives encompassing the cognitive, skill, fitness, and affective domains. In modern society, we must educate students to encourage positive attitudes and behaviors. Hellison’s TPSR is an appropriate curriculum model that incorporates character education into physical education. In the past, TPSR was used in traditional physical education classes and resulted improvements in students’ character. Moreover, use of TPSR in Sidentop’s sport education model resulted in improvements in measures of students’ responsibility in the affective domain. In summary, it is worthwhile to develop TPSR in teaching physical education in order to promote students’ personal and social responsibility.

**Reference**


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Pan: Teaching Responsibility Through Physical Education

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