APPLYING HELLISON'S RESPONSIBILITY MODEL IN A YOUTH RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT FACILITY: A PRACTICAL INQUIRY PROJECT

APLICANDO EL MODELO DE RESPONSABILIDAD DE HELLISON EN UN CENTRO RESIDENCIAL DE TRATAMIENTO DE JÓVENES: UN PROYECTO DE INDAGACIÓN EN LA PRÁCTICA

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ABSTRACT

Much of the literature on Hellison's Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model focuses on programs that are implemented by community engaged professors. It is also important that the literature reflect the implementation of TPSR by full time teachers, youth workers, etc. In this paper we describe the practical inquiry framework and how it was applied by Cheryl, a full time teacher in a recreational therapy program, as she tried to integrate strategies from the TPSR model to enhance her effectiveness in working with emotionally and behaviorally troubled youth. Through a reflective and iterative process she was able to adapt several TPSR strategies and structures to fit her particular teaching situation. She also developed several situational insights that led to the development of novel tactics and strategies. Cheryl's story illustrates that effective implementation of TPSR requires teachers to mold and contour the model to fit their context. We encourage practitioners to be creative in their use of TPSR and consider using the practical inquiry framework for curriculum development as they strive to act morally and effectively in pedagogical situations.

RESUMEN

Por lo general, la literatura sobre el modelo de Enseñanza para la Responsabilidad Personal y Social de Hellison (Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility-TPSR) se centra en programas que llevados a cabo por profesores 'comunitarios'. A este respecto, es importante que la literatura refleje también el desarrollo de programas TPSR por parte de maestros a tiempo completo en instituciones escolares, por educadores juveniles, etc. En este artículo describimos el método de indagación en la práctica y el modo en que lo aplicó Cheryl, maestra a tiempo completo en un

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programa de terapia recreacional, al intentar utilizar las estrategias del TPSR para aumentar la eficacia en su trabajo con jóvenes con trastornos emocionales y de conducta. Mediante un proceso reflexivo e iterativo, pudo adaptar varias estructuras y estrategias del modelo TPSR a su contexto particular de enseñanza. Realizó también perspicaces análisis de situaciones específicas que le permitieron desarrollar nuevas tácticas y estrategias. En fin, la historia de Cheryl ilustra el hecho de que la implementación eficaz del modelo TPSR por parte de los maestros requiere que éstos lo ajusten y adapten a su situación. Animamos a los profesionales a que sean creativos en su uso del TPSR y a que consideren la utilidad de la indagación práctica para el desarrollo del currículo, tratando de actuar de manera moral y eficaz en situaciones pedagógicas.

KEYWORDS. Personal and social responsibility; recreational therapy; practical inquiry; residential facility; emotionally and behaviorally troubled youth

PALABRAS CLAVE. Responsabilidad personal y social; terapia recreacional; indagación en la práctica; residencia; jóvenes; problemas emocionales; problemas de comportamiento.

1. Introduction

Instructional models are becoming increasingly popular in the field of physical education and sport pedagogy. Several of these, including Hellison's (2011) Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility (TPSR) model, have been disseminated internationally and are the focus of a growing body of research literature (Metzler, 2005). Published descriptions of instructional models and peer-reviewed research about them can illuminate their underlying value orientations and goals as well as their unique organizational structures and instructional strategies (Jewett, Bain, & Ennis, 1995). Although these descriptions and the extant literature further our knowledge about them, these models only have a positive impact on children and youth when they are translated into practice.

One strength of the TPSR model in this regard is that many of the scholars who write about this model are also practitioners who use it in their work with children and youth. This has kept most of the writing about TPSR rooted in the reality of practice. The term service-bonded inquiry has been used to describe the action oriented approach to research taken by many community engaged professors who work with TPSR (Martinek & Hellison, 1997; Martinek, Hellison, & Walsh, 2004). A similar framework that may be of more use to full time teachers, recreational therapists, and youth workers interested in doing curriculum development with TPSR is practical inquiry (Schubert, 1986). The utility of the practical inquiry

framework in describing and analyzing the TPSR curriculum development process has been demonstrated in two separate studies conducted by former doctoral students of Don Hellison (Georgiadis, 1992; Wright, 2001). In this paper we describe the practical inquiry framework and how it was applied by Cheryl, a full time teacher in a recreational therapy program, as she tried to integrate strategies from the TPSR model to enhance her effectiveness in working with emotionally and behaviorally troubled youth.

The TPSR model is described more fully in the introductory chapter of this monograph. In brief, it is an instructional model that has been developed through more than 40 years of fieldwork (Hellison, 2011). The model uses physical activity as a vehicle to teach life skills and promote positive youth development (Hellison, Cutforth, Kallusky, Martinek, Parker & Stiehl, 2000). TPSR emphasizes the development of personally and socially responsible behaviors in the physical activity setting and beyond. The responsibility goals, often referred to as levels, for participants include respect for the rights and feelings of others, self-motivation, self-direction, and helping/caring. While the structures and teaching strategies used in this model are implemented in the physical activity setting, the ultimate aim is that the life skills learned in TPSR programs will be transferred, or applied in other settings, and carried into the future by participants (Hellison, 2011).

As for practical inquiry, this approach to curriculum development was proposed as a reaction to the theoretical approach to inquiry that has long dominated in the field of education (Schwab, 1969, 1971, 1973, 1983). Schwab's practical inquiry approach is rooted in the particulars of a learning situation. It is concerned with the context and actual state of affairs rather than abstract theory or generalizations (Schubert, 1986). Schwab's approach recognizes the significance of the learning experience and the need to be sensitive to the various factors that come together in the learning environment. This approach to curriculum design requires skill in the eclectic arts of matching knowledge to situations, tailoring and adapting that knowledge to situations, and inventing personal knowledge through experience in educational situations. Another concept that is integral to Schwab's practical approach is the consideration of four commonplaces (Schwab, 1973). These commonplaces: milieu or environment, teachers, learners, and subject matter are in constant interaction. To understand a learning experience and generate situational insight, all of these must be considered.

The project described in this paper is one that Cheryl undertook as the culminating experience to complete her requirements for a master of science degree in

physical education teacher education from the University of Memphis. Her major advisor in this project was Carol, an assistant professor at the time with a total of 25 years experience as a physical education teacher and/or administrator. Paul, an associate professor at the time with 15 years experience using the TPSR model, was involved in all aspects of the project and actively supported Cheryl's implementation of the TPSR model.

2. Cheryl's Teaching Situation

As noted above, Schwab (1973) asserts that every learning experience involves the dynamic interaction of four commonplaces. We use this framework to provide a brief description of Cheryl's teaching situation.

2.1. The Milieu/Environment

The residential treatment facility where Cheryl works is part of a private, nonprofit organization in the United States that is dedicated to helping emotionally and behaviorally troubled children and their families through the provision of mental health services and related support. The organization operates in more than 20 states across the nation. It has been in existence for 25 years and serves more than 17,000 children and their families each year. Residential treatment is one of the programs offered by the organization. The campus where Cheryl works provides residential mental health treatment for boys ages 8-17 and girls 11-17 who have serious emotional and behavioral problems. The teaching staff at the facility contributes to the children's intensive mental health treatment using a youth therapy model that focuses on structured routines, clear expectations, and a system of rewards and consequences.

2.2. The Teacher

At the time of this project, Cheryl, a white female, was 28 years old. She had been teaching recreational therapy in this particular residential treatment facility for seven years and had served as the director of the recreational therapy department for two years. Her background and training in sport, physical education, and recreational therapy consisted mostly of on the job training with some personal experience playing team sports and holding roles such as team captain. She also worked with children in team sports camps. Having learned much of what she knows about recreational therapy on the job and through professional develop-ment, Cheryl enrolled in the master's degree program in physical education teacher education at the University of Memphis to further her education and

increase her knowledge of research and best practices that might apply to her work.

2.3. The Learners

While the youth population served at Cheryl's facility was described above, she chose to implement this project with one particular group. She decided to focus on one recreational therapy class that consisted of approximately 10 boys, ranging in age from 14 to 16 years old. By virtue of the fact that they were in this facility, all these boys were considered emotionally and behaviorally troubled. Anger, anti-social behavior, and impulse control were particularly problematic issues with the boys in this group. The boys came from different racial/ethnic backgrounds including White, African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian American.

2.4. The Subject Matter

The recreational therapy department at Cheryl's campus is fortunate to have a range of equipment and facilities at their disposal including a gymnasium, sand volleyball court, playground, a hiking trail and a small lake. According to program materials, the staff uses the indoor and outdoor facilities to provide physical activities that highlight teamwork, sportsmanship, trust, and positive communication. The group of boys participating in this project was working on a basketball unit with a secondary emphasis on physical fitness. At the time of this project, the group was meeting in the gymnasium for 50 minutes three days per week.

3. Why Practical Inquiry?

Practical inquiry appeared a good fit to frame Cheryl's project because its basic assumptions resonated with the nature of her situation and her immediate goals as a teacher. Unlike theory driven approaches to curriculum development, Schwab's practical inquiry begins and ends with practice. As described by Schubert (1986: 282), the orientation, process, and purposes of practical inquiry stem from the following four assumptions:

- I. The source of problems is found in the state of affairs, not in the abstract conjuring of researchers who tend to imagine similarities among situations that cannot be grouped together defensibly.

- II. The method of practical curriculum inquiry is interaction with the state of affairs to be studied, rather than detached induction upon it and deduction about it.

- III. The subject matter sought in the process of practical curriculum inquiry

is situational insight and understanding, instead of lawlike generalizations that extend across a wide range of situations.

- IV. The end of practical curriculum inquiry is increased capacity to act morally and effectively in pedagogical situations, not primarily the generation of generalized publishable knowledge.

As a professional who works daily in a residential treatment facility, Cheryl did not need to look to the research literature to understand the challenges and difficulties that come with teaching emotionally and behaviorally troubled youth. As stated in the first assumption, the source of the problems she encountered as a teacher was found in the state of affairs in the gymnasium. Chief among these problems were anti-social behavior and low impulse control among her students. In choosing a topic for her culminating project, it was clear to all of us that Cheryl wanted to address these problems directly in her own practice rather than from an objective or removed stance. Hence, the second assumption appeared to be a good fit. Regarding the third assumption, Cheryl was primarily interested in gaining situational insight to improve teaching and learning in her own gymnasium. Finally, regarding the fourth assumption of practical inquiry, Cheryl is a committed professional who strives to be the best teacher she can be and to best serve the youth she teaches. In undertaking this project, she was motivated to increase her capacity to act morally and effectively in pedagogical situations with her students. As evidenced by this paper, she was not averse to sharing her insights with others but the purpose of the project was not to produce generalizations.

4. Why TPSR?

Cheryl's choice to integrate TPSR into her teaching provides a nice example of what in practical inquiry is considered the eclectic arts of making disciplinary knowledge useful in practice. Schubert (1986: 297) summarizes these arts as follows:

- I. The capacity to match theoretical or disciplinary knowledge and perspective to situational needs and interests.
- II. The capacity to tailor and adapt theoretical or disciplinary knowledge and perspectives to situational needs and interests.
- III. The capacity to generate alternative courses of action and to anticipate the consequences of such action for moral good.

As noted earlier, Cheryl embarked on this project toward the end of a graduate program in physical education teacher education. Throughout this program she read a wide range of chapters and original research articles on various instructional models. In line with the first art described above, she gravitated toward the TPSR model because of the relevance she saw to her situational needs and her personal interests. In the following excerpt from her reflective writing about this project, she stated:

> In my search to find an answer to this overwhelming problem, I came across a teaching model in physical education that immediately caught my attention. This model focuses on helping youth to change their choices and behavior through their involvement in activities and recreation. I knew instinctively this model could have an impact on the at risk youth that I work with. The model is the Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility Model (TPSR).

As her interest in the TPSR model grew, Cheryl continued to read and learn more about it. Paul and Carol discussed this model with her and also encouraged her to review other ideas and theories that might be relevant to her situation and compliment her knowledge of TPSR as she developed her plans. These topics included positive youth development, urban education, and self-control theory.

Having identified ideas from outside sources that appeared relevant and useful to her as a practitioner, Cheryl set out put these ideas into practice in her gymnasium. While she began with several specific plans regarding the infusion of TPSR into her teaching of the upcoming basketball unit, the nature of the project was to be iterative and reflective. Through trial, error, and reflection, she spent the next several weeks applying the second and third eclectic arts, i.e., adapting theoretical and disciplinary knowledge and generating alternative courses of action. This process and several of the situational insights she came to are detailed in the following section.

5. Focus on Teaching Strategies

As explained above, Cheryl's project involved hands-on work with the TPSR model and ongoing reflection. She had frequent debriefing sessions and ongoing communication with Carol throughout. Paul's role was specifically to support Cheryl's understanding and implementation of the TPSR. To provide some structure for this, they focused on nine specific teaching strategies that are drawn

from the Tool for Assessing Responsibility Based Education (TARE; see **Table 1**). This tool exists in two forms. One is the TARE observation tool (Wright & Craig, 2011) which has been shown to yield valid and reliable results relating to the use of responsibility-based teaching strategies. The other is the TARE post-teaching reflection (Hellison & Wright, 2011) which is recommended for use by practitioners to document their implementation of TPSR as well as to prompt reflection and continuous improvement. Both versions of the TARE include additional sections that document lesson details and contextual factors.

In descriptions of the TARE instruments (Hellison & Wright, 2011; Wright & Craig, 2011), it has been suggested they could be useful in training and professional development related to TPSR. Paul used them in combination for these purposes in previous action research projects conducted at the University of Memphis and he has trained other TPSR scholars to use a similar approach. At present, this method of training/professional development using the combination of the TARE observation and post-teaching reflection instruments has been applied with success at Adelphi University, Purdue University, the University of Windsor in Canada, as well as the University of Valencia in Spain. In fact, a Spanish language version of the TARE has been developed and shown to have inter-rater agreement levels similar to the original English version. Recent studies conducted at several of these sites will be published in the near future. At present, based in Paul's experience and feedback from other TPSR scholars, we decided these instruments were well suited for use in Cheryl's project.

Before initiating the project, Cheryl completed the TARE post-teaching reflection based on the previous two weeks of teaching to describe her normal practice, identify which strategies she was already using, and reflect on her greatest opportunities for improvement. After debriefing with Paul and setting some plans for improvement she began implementing her TPSR unit and completing a TARE post-teaching reflection after each lesson. Paul provided support throughout the process through telephone calls and electronic communication. Additionally, he visited her program two times, once toward the beginning and again toward the end of the TPSR unit. During these visits he used the time sampling methodology that is part of the TARE observation tool procedures, marking which strategies he saw used in 5-minute intervals throughout the lesson. After these observations, the two would debrief and Paul would provide supportive feedback including specific suggestions for improvement. Used in these ways, the TARE instruments not only documented Cheryl's implementation but shaped it. The nine teaching

strategies from the TARE (see **Table 1**) became consistent reference points for Cheryl's reflection and provided a framework that guided her efforts. Much of her implementation and curriculum development process, therefore, focused on the development of specific tactics that enabled her to enact the general teaching strategies from the TARE.

6. Situational Insights

Although details regarding lesson context and student behavior were documented when both versions of the TARE were completed, the key experiences and situational insights reported in this section are organized around the nine strategies displayed in **Table 1**. Relative to each strategy, we describe the particular tactics that Cheryl either borrowed or adapted from the extant literature as well as those she developed on her own.

Modeling Respect: Teacher models respectful communication. This would involve communication with the whole group or individual students. Looks like: appropriate communication and instruction. Does not look like: rolling out the ball, losing temper, or embarrassing students.

Setting Expectations: Teacher explains or refers to explicit behavioral expectations. These could relate to safe practices, rules and procedures, or etiquette.

Opportunities for Success: Teacher structures lesson so that all students have the opportunity to successfully participate and be included regardless of individual differences.

Fostering Social Interaction: Teacher structures activities that foster positive social interaction. This could involve student-student interaction through cooperation, teamwork, problem solving, conflict resolution or debriefing. (This only counts if it is structured by the teacher; rolling out the ball does not count.)

Assigning Management Tasks: Teacher assigns specific responsibilities or tasks (other than leadership) that facilitate the organization of the program or a specific activity. This could look like taking attendance, setting up equipment, keeping score/records, or officiating a game.

Leadership: Teacher allows students to lead or be in charge of a group. This could look like demonstrating for the class, leading a station, teaching/leading exercises for the whole class, or coaching a team.

Giving Choices and Voices: Teacher gives students a voice in the program. This could involve group discussions, voting as a group; individual choices, students asking questions, making suggestions, sharing opinions, evaluating the teacher or program.

Role in Assessment: Teacher allows students to have a role in learner assessment. This could take the form of self- or peer-assessment related to skill development, behavior, attitude, etc.; it could also involve goal-setting or a negotiation between teacher and student on their grade or progress in the class.

Transfer: Teacher directly addresses the transfer of life skills or responsibilities from the lesson beyond the program. This could include links such as: the need to work hard and persevere in school; the importance of being a leader in your community; keeping your self-control to avoid a fight after school; setting goals to achieve what you want in sports; the need to be a good team player when you grow up and get a job; or the value of thinking for yourself to avoid peer-pressure.

Table 1: TARE strategies (from Wright & Craig, 2011)

The first strategy listed on the TARE is *modeling respect*. This is something Cheryl felt she did extremely well before this project. It was a natural part of her teaching style that she had developed over seven years of working with troubled youth. Specific examples of tactics she used to model respect with her students included calling them by their names, making eye contact when talking with them, and always viewing them in a positive light regardless of their behavior at any given moment. She had already learned, before this project, that among her students, in order to be respected as a teacher she needed to show them respect as individuals. Also in her experience, she learned that with respect comes trust.

The next teaching strategy in the TARE is *setting expectations*. This was another area of strength for Cheryl. Even before the project she felt this was a characteristic of her recreation therapy classes. Specific tactics she routinely used to enact this strategy were communicating expectations regarding student behavior through the use of specific behavior focused goals. In fact, even before learning about TPSR, she was in the habit of having students form a circle for brief meetings before class, similar to Hellison's (2011) awareness talks. At the beginning of every lesson she would ask the students to sit with her in a circle and for each one to i) state how they were feeling at that moment, and ii) choose and state a behavior focused goal that was relevant to them, such as, *"I will not lose my temper during the game"*. Cheryl was also in the habit of explaining the rules of each game/activity as well as the objectives of the lesson for that day during these opening meetings.

The third teaching strategy in the TARE is *opportunities for success*. This is also something that Cheryl was doing on a regular basis in her therapeutic recreation classes. However, one thing she struggled with was how to deal with students who chose not to participate in an activity due to outside circumstances, such as attitude or behavior. Because these issues came up with some frequency, she decided to proceed with the perspective that as long as she was making the activities accessible to everyone, regardless of talent or skill level, then she was giving them the opportunity to succeed. As the teacher, she realized she was not in control of the students' choice to participate only how she communicated her expectations and encouraged them to take advantage of the opportunity. Another tactic she used to give opportunities for success was to make sure that all students were included in group discussions. She also realized that giving the students time to ask questions and for her to ask the students questions to check for understanding helped to make sure everyone was set up for success. In other words,

proactive two-way communication with the students proved to be an important ingredient for their success.

The next strategy, **fostering social interaction**, was the hardest for Cheryl to consistently implement. Fostering social interaction is defined in the TARE as structuring activities that will give the students the opportunity to have positive social interactions. This can be done, for example, through peer coaching, cooperation, teamwork, or debriefing. The students Cheryl works with are often very negative towards each other. When they do interact during activities it is often a "put down" about making a mistake or antagonizing a peer. In an attempt to foster social interaction among the students, at the end of class Cheryl tried having them pair up to talk about the individual behavior goals they had set at the beginning of the lesson and whether or not they thought they had accomplished these goals. Also, at the end of class, during debriefing of the activities, Cheryl would have the students give feedback on how the group did during the activity. This structure, by the way, is something she already did that was quite similar to Hellison's (2011) group meetings that are held toward the end of a TPSR lesson. Initially, Cheryl's students would call attention to negative behaviors concerning individual students rather than the group's performance. Hellison (2011) himself has noted the challenge of running group meetings without finger pointing. With this group of students, Cheryl found it was important to keep returning their focus to group level feedback only. With time, they did get better at giving the group feedback without pointing fingers at individuals.

After struggling with fostering social interaction, Cheryl realized that this group required coaching on how to have the simplest positive interactions with each other. They were not accustomed to interacting with each other positively. It was a skill they lacked and one that no one was teaching them. Simply introducing a cooperative task and leaving them to their own devices was not sufficient. A successful attempt in this area came during an opening meeting/awareness talk. Cheryl had every student give one example of a positive feedback statement they could make to a peer who had made a mistake instead of a negative feedback statement. Another tactic she used was to focus on certain individuals who could give positive feedback and put them in situations where they could do so to develop these skills and model for their peers. As the instructor, Cheryl modeled positive social interaction by cheering on everyone in the group, even when they made a mistake. Sometimes after an activity in the debriefing/group meeting she would ask the students to recall what positive things she had said to them and to think of similar things they could say when coaching their peers.

This was a key area of need that emerged in this project. Cheryl realized that many of the organizational structures she wanted to use to promote social responsibility had prerequisite skills her students were lacking. With this insight, she continues to coach students on what she is looking for in terms of positive social interactions. She is also creating opportunities for those who can handle one-on-one situations to work with their peers.

Assigning management tasks is the next teaching strategy described in the TARE. One of the novel strategies Cheryl developed to implement TPSR in her setting was weekly planning meetings with the students. During these meetings, which are described in more detail later, Cheryl would ask one of the students to write on paper what the group had planned out for the week. She would also assign students to help with equipment distribution as well as set up and take down for certain activities. Another popular task among this group was to be the score keeper for activities or to help officiate a game.

The sixth teaching strategy described in the TARE is ***leadership***. Before implementing TPSR, Cheryl had noticed some students demonstrated leadership naturally from time to time. Although she had not previously focused on this, she realized that there were natural leaders in most of her groups. What this project prompted her to do was pay more attention to and capitalize on her students' aptitude for leadership. Drawing on the TPSR literature and her conversations with Carol and Paul, she started looking for ways to provide planned and structured leadership opportunities in her lesson. One simple tactic she introduced first was having students volunteer to lead the different warm up exercises and stretches before the activities. She would have the student leader demonstrate the exercise for the group and then count it off with everyone else performing the task along with them. Next, she moved on to having students demonstrate skills for the class, such as how to do a left-handed lay-up or how to serve a volleyball. While her goal by the end of this project was to integrate more helping and coaching roles, this again brought up the struggles with positive social interaction. For example, some of the more athletic students in the group thought they should automatically have the opportunity to show others how to perform a skill. However, these students would sometimes communicate this in a negative way, offending the students who were not as good at that particular skill. So Cheryl decided that regardless of actual skill level, her first criteria in selecting a student to be in a leadership or helping role would be their ability to be positive and supportive with their peers.

The next strategy, ***giving choices and voices***, was something Cheryl did to some extent before the project. As noted before, she had opening meetings and debriefing sessions before and after her lessons that were similar to Hellison's (2011) awareness talks, group meetings, and reflection times. However, throughout the course of this project she developed several other tactics to support this strategy and found them to be extremely powerful. In the past, the only real choice the students were allowed regarding activities was choosing one of the games/activities for the next week as a reward for good behavior. As part of this project, Cheryl began holding planning meetings each week for the upcoming week's lesson plans. The group would come up with a list of possible activities then, as a group, decide on three to execute. They would also work together to decide what days they would play each of those activities. Then, they would decide what stretches, exercises, or drills they wanted to do before that activity. They even came up with a line order for one activity and picked teams as a group for upcoming units on volleyball and flag football. In very little time, the students got to the point where they could develop plans with little guidance from Cheryl. When they would get to class she would remind them of what they had decided to play and make sure everyone still agreed. During debriefing she also gave them the opportunity to say whether or not they enjoyed the activity or what they would do differently. Even though Cheryl had not given much choice to the students before TPSR, she found this came easily to her and that the students responded to it extremely well.

Role in assessment is the next strategy on the TARE. As noted earlier, even before this project Cheryl would have the students set a behavior goal before starting an activity, such as, *"respect my peers", "use good sportsmanship"* or *"don't curse today"*. At the end of the lesson they would debrief the activity and talk about whether or not the goals were met. This process was continued throughout the TPSR project and proved to be one of Cheryl's most consistent ways of allowing them to have a part in the assessment of their behavior. She also probed the group during debriefing to talk about group successes and struggles (a typical TPSR group meeting topic) as well as their own personal successes and struggles (a typical TPSR reflection time topic). These discussions were less specific but still allowed students to assess themselves and others. During the course of this project, Cheryl did not use any formal/written assessment strategies, but recognized that adding something like a self-rating system on behavior would be a good next step. She also considered creating rating cards that could be filled out by

students and turned in at the end of class. Even skill assessments could provide a mechanism for sharing responsibility if students were allowed to assess themselves or their peers.

The final teaching strategy covered in the TARE is **transfer**. Transfer was a familiar concept to Cheryl because it was already an objective of the therapeutic recreation program. Her staff would often talk about how skills such as cooperation, teamwork, and communication were used in the activities and how these same skills could be used in the classroom, community, or at home. However, prior to this project, transfer was not a topic that was discussed directly with the students on a regular basis. On this point, in some of her reflective writing, Cheryl wrote:

> "We did not talk about transfer every day before TPSR and we didn't talk about it every day during TPSR, but when the opportunity would arise to point out a good transfer skill, I would do my best to process this with the students".

When Cheryl would lead these discussions, she was pleased to see the students were able to give examples of how the life skills used in the activity could be applied in their everyday lives at the facility. Moreover, students could also explain how they could apply these life skills when they rejoined the community and returned home. Her students were emotionally and behaviorally troubled but clearly intelligent enough to make these connections. The key for Cheryl to promoting transfer was remembering to address it directly and not assuming that students were connecting the dots. Even though she and her peers always knew what life skills they wanted students to take away from their program, they had not been purposeful about getting this message across to the students and making sure they were receiving it.

7. Conclusion

Before this project, Cheryl had been effective in using fairly traditional behavior management strategies to keep her students under control but had struggled to find ways to empower them to take responsibility for their own choices and decisions. She had the personal desire to empower her students based on her own values and teaching philosophy, but this was not part of the tradition or culture of the program. This practical inquiry project enabled her to draw from the structures and strategies of TPSR to alter her teaching practice in ways that better

aligned with her beliefs about good teaching and what she wanted to impart to her students. By the end, she had reoriented her approach and set new and higher goals for herself and her students. As a result, she believed her teaching practice had become more closely aligned with her personal values. This increased her feelings of engagement and enthusiasm for her teaching. While this project did not involve formal data collection from her students, Cheryl saw in numerous ways that these shifts in her practice increased engagement for many of her students and helped them to accept more responsibility for the way they treated others and conducted themselves.

Through this project, Cheryl realized that many of the structures and strategies she was using previously did align with her values and she retained these, such as the opening meetings at the beginning of lessons and the debriefing sessions at the end. She also created new tactics and found that some came easily and naturally, like involving students in planning meetings. Other strategies were difficult to implement and required more planning and perseverance. Fostering social interaction, for example, was especially hard for her group as they continually focused on each other's mistakes and put each other down when they were given any freedom to interact socially. However, through trial and error she did generate a number of situational insights. For instance, regarding the slow progress in fostering positive social interactions she found it useful to hand pick students who were ready for such roles rather than expecting the entire group to be ready to take them on at the same time. She took a similar approach to cultivating leadership among her students and also found success. Another significant insight that arose from this project related to transfer. Previously, Cheryl probably would have stated with confidence that a number of life skills were addressed in her program and that these were among the greatest benefits her students get from the program. However, she concluded this project with a deeper understanding of what it means to promote the transfer of life skills through physical activity, i.e. it does not occur by osmosis and if she is not addressing it directly with the students, she is not addressing it at all.

In keeping with the assumptions of practical inquiry, we would not expect Cheryl's insights to generalize automatically to other situations. The TPSR model provided her with a number of relevant strategies but her implementation was tailored to fit the dynamic interactions and contextual factors that came in to play in her gymnasium. In this case, we found that the structure provided by the TARE instruments, especially related to the discrete teaching strategies, added focus

and a sense of direction for Cheryl as she developed her TPSR program. The tactics she developed to implement the various strategies were tailored to her context, but other practitioners looking for a structure to guide their own TPSR implementation may want to consider a similar approach, i.e., a practical inquiry process focusing on the strategies contained in the TARE. As suggested in TARE instrument descriptions (Hellison & Wright, 2011; Wright & Craig, 2011), we saw in this project that having a supportive peer and/or experienced practitioner to conduct observations and provide feedback can be a meaningful part of this process. Of course, not all practitioners will have someone able to fill this role for them. In these cases the same basic process can be undertaken using the TARE post-teaching reflection tool alone.

What we hope readers may gain from this paper is a better sense of how full time teachers, youth workers, and recreational therapists can benefit from and actively engage with TPSR. As Hellison (2011) has noted, it is likely that practitioners who can quickly absorb and enact the essential aspects of this model are able to do so because they have a similar teaching philosophy and value orientation. But even in these cases, as we have seen in Cheryl's story, for their implementation to be effective it must be molded and contoured to the state of affairs in their unique teaching situation. We therefore encourage practitioners to be creative in their use of TPSR and consider using practical inquiry as a framework for curriculum development as they strive to act morally and effectively in pedagogical situations.

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