

A COMPARISON OF THE COMMAND AND TASK METHODS OF TEACHING  
IN RELATION TO PHYSICAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTION

by 6791

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## INTRODUCTION

Teaching is the process of helping other individuals to learn. A teacher plans the learning experiences of his students and presents the subject matter by means of a teaching method (4:23).

The usual mode of instruction in physical education is the command teaching method. Essentially, the command style consists of teacher demonstration, explanation, student execution or imitation, and finally teacher evaluation. A recently developed teaching method utilizes the teacher presentation of the task by demonstration and/or explanation and/or directed questioning and then the performance of the activity by the students on their own (10:27).

## PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this paper was to enlighten teachers about the task method of teaching and to compare it to the traditional command style of teaching. Considering the fact that most physical educators have as one of their objectives to develop the student physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually (3:2, 6:37); it is important that the teacher evaluate their teaching style to see if this objective is fulfilled as successfully as possible. Since the command method of teaching has a long history of use in physical education, and is perhaps the most prevalent style of teaching now used in physical education classes, it is hopeful that after reading this report teachers will realize how limiting the method of command teaching is in terms of fulfilling this objective.

## METHOD OF STUDY

An investigation of literature relative to this subject was conducted from sources located in Farrell Library on the Kansas State University campus and the Department of Physical Education at the University.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### The Command Method

The purpose of the command style is to elicit a response or many responses from one or more persons. For the students to exhibit these responses, there must be something that initiates the action which is a stimulus. The stimulus, the command issued by the teacher, may take the form of either a general announcement of the selected subject matter or detailed direction for the students to follow. Examples of such commands are respectively, "Today you will run half a mile!" or "When you perform the handstand today, note the place of your shoulders; make sure they are placed over the base and avoid an excessive arch at the lower back!"

The important principle involved here is that the sought responses and the stimuli used to produce them are results of decisions made by the teacher. Another principle is that the role of the student is to respond to the teacher's stimuli. This is based on traditional assumptions of the teacher-student relationship which are that since the teacher possesses knowledge and is experienced, then his role is to tell things to others; and the role of the others is to listen, to absorb, and to comply.

Whenever the process of stimulus-response functions well, one can identify the following features in a given lesson:

1. Organizational patterns are well executed. When the command to line up in a particular geometric form is issued, the response is practically immediate.
2. When attention is called for, it is there! (In the command framework this behavior is referred to as good discipline.)
3. Any command for motion is followed (instantly, in most cases) by a physical response--performed either in unison or individually, primarily depending upon the nature of the activity or the traditional way in which this activity has been carried out.
4. A meticulous teacher will offer group or individual corrections (if the response was "wrong" in the light of his preferences). This is often done by stopping the entire class (Stimulus: "Hold it!" "Stop!" blowing a whistle, or any other agreed-upon signal. Expected response: the class stops the activity!), whereupon the teacher identifies the error, states the correction, and then gives the command to resume the activity.
5. When the lesson is over, the teacher's command stops the activity. Then follows some sort of end-lesson ceremony: a particular formation, an announcement concerning the day's achievements, a preparatory statement about the next lesson, or the like.

In these five features of the lesson, the closer the students' responses to the teacher's stimuli (in time and in accuracy), the more perfect the lesson. The closer the lesson is to perfection, the more it substantiates the validity of the fundamental assumptions of the command style (10:20, 21). Reciprocally, the stronger the teacher's belief in these assumptions, the more nearly perfect is the execution of the lesson taught in this style.

The assumptions underlying the command style also include the expectation of progress and growth along the objectives of physical education. Physical development will supposedly occur as a result of

fluent participation in the activity directed by the teacher. Social awareness will supposedly result from the student's adherence to the rules and specifications imposed by the teacher. Emotional growth will supposedly occur as a result of the individual's assumed acceptance of his role as a member of a group as perceived and evaluated by the teacher. Intellectual development is assumed, since the student's acceptance of what the teacher offered and his performance of what the teacher requested both require some cognitive involvement and understanding of what the teacher wants (3:39).

The command style then, is the style which focuses on the teacher and the subject matter. The teacher is the only one who may make decisions concerning physical activities; he is the one who determines the social-emotional climate in the class. Most often he seems to be the only one involved in some measure in the cognitive process or in cognitive activities. The student is expected to adhere to the physical limitations set, determined, and controlled by the teacher. These physical limitations imposed on the student may take any one or all of the following forms.

Organization is a limitation. The student may have to stand on a particular spot in the gymnasium as assigned by the teacher. Consequently, limitations may be imposed when students change positions on the floor such as moving from one activity area to another or from one station to another. The teacher determines when the change will take place, where each group shall go, what the direction of movement should be, and what formation should be used while students move to the new destination. These aspects of control are exhibited in most physical limitations imposed upon the student (10:23).



Limitations may also be imposed in the teaching of movement. When a teacher uses the command style and conceives his role as that of a conveyer of information or a transmitter of knowledge, he tells. Teachers may differ in their tone of voice, the length of their speeches, or their use of gimmicks; but whenever information is delivered, the style of teaching behavior is the same. Consequently, the role of the student in the relationship remains the same--a reflection of the teacher's commands with as close adherence as possible to the standard performance demanded by the teacher (10:24).

Since the demonstration is important in teaching physical activities by the command style, it is briefly discussed. While a teacher is demonstrating, the student must observe. The student is the passive recipient of all these stimuli and influences; and all he has to do is accept and equal the performance. Acceptance and equalization then, seem to be the purpose of teaching as reflected by the command style. The focus is on the teacher and his standards, and on the performance repeated by the student (8:137).

After discussing the command method of teaching, it is necessary to propose a few questions to evaluate whether or not this method fulfills the objective of physical education for an individual. Is it not true that in most physical education classes one observes a fairly large number of students? Is it not true that the students attending the same class are of a variety of shapes, sizes, and physical abilities? Yet, all of these students are expected to respond to a single stimulus, to adhere to a single rhythm, to attempt performance fashioned by a single standard, and to try their best to attain the standards determined by one person.

Does this way of teaching movement help reach the desired goal of individualized development and learning? What happens emotionally to a young person who constantly has to obey others--more specifically, the adult authority? What happens to the self concept of a young, growing person who has to accept all the decisions which are made for him by others? What kind of strengths will such a person develop? Will he develop any besides the ability to obey and to do what others tell him to do?

What about social development? Does not the phrase "learning social freedom" connote learning to relate to others, learning to make judgments when one is in a group situation, learning to exchange ideas, learning to evaluate exchanged ideas, learning to communicate with others, and learning to establish the self in new social frame-works and conditions without hesitation and fear? How is it possible for anyone--a young child or an adult--to experience fruitful and meaningful socialization when the opportunity to associate and communicate with others rarely occurs? In order for a child to learn how to be free in a social situation he must experience the sense of being free and experiment with this freedom; he must have the opportunity to find out about the limits of freedom within the social structure (10:27, 28).

What about intellectual development? Elimination of thinking, questioning, inquiry, doubt, imagination, and experimentation with un-orthodox ideas produces intellectually sterile individuals (5:17). The command style in physical education inhibits and prevents growth of cognition.

### The Task Method

The task method of teaching better fulfills the individualization objective in physical education (9:109). The students have a much greater role in the lesson. In the preparation of the lesson, all components are decided upon by the teacher in order to maintain control over the subject matter. Once the class is organized, the task is presented by demonstration (4:49); by explanation, by both, or by guided questioning. However, when the lesson reaches the point of doing or performing the activity, the students can be taught to perform on their own. Most students then, are independent enough to start the movement on their own, perform it a certain number of times or for a certain duration, and stop on their own.

Permitting the students to learn to execute the movement tasks on their own will achieve several goals:

1. The focus to the student may develop more responsibility for his individual performance.
2. Self-motivated execution of the task may suit best the individual's ability, temperament, and aspirations.
3. Individualized learning begins to emerge.
4. Independence from the teacher begins to evolve.
5. Since the student learns to be independent and to control his own performance in small tasks, the teacher's position in decision making and control is not jeopardized. On the contrary, the teacher may gain new strength by using the time of the students' self-directed performance for observation, for individual corrections, or for individual reinforcement.
6. The teacher begins to gain new freedoms for himself. When he uses the command style, the teacher must be at the controls at all times. This can become rather tiresome and is so often wasteful since the teacher must concern himself with so many irrelevancies.

Teaching by task creates opportunities for new relationships between the teacher and the students and permits the teacher to develop and assume a new role for himself while the students enter a new phase of self-development (10:31, 32).

The main purpose of the task method is to teach the student to increase his capacity for decision making. Particular emphasis is placed upon constructive and creative activities, on freedom and mental independence, and on self discipline (2:7). The method also presupposes a different kind of relationship between the teacher and the students; therefore, communication techniques, as well as organizational patterns and the social-emotional climate, must be treated in a different manner.

The organizational pattern used with the task method is random organization. This type of pattern improves communication. If the teacher chooses to demonstrate, he has a better chance of being seen by all when the students are randomly organized. One of the best techniques of demonstration is to tell students to come near so that they can really see every detail of the demonstration. The physical proximity adds a human dimension to the process of communication. When the students are close, the teacher can use his normal voice, can talk to them not at them, and can see their facial expressions and responses.

After demonstrating, the next step is to explain the tasks one at a time. Then the students assume positions on the gym floor and perform the desired task. While performance goes on, the teacher can move about, can observe individuals, and can offer comments to individuals. Before long it is possible to have communicated individually with most or all of the students. When the task seems to have been completed by most

or all students, they should be called back to the teacher (possibly at a different point in the gym) and proceed with the next task. The dispersement and assembly, in addition to aiding communication, helps break the monotony that is present in traditional organizational patterns.

The presentation of tasks can take the following forms:

1. A single task for the entire class.
2. A sequence of tasks for the entire class, leading to the accomplishment of a given movement or activity.
3. A range of tasks within the single major task, of varying degrees of difficulty and based on analysis of the parts of the subject matter. This is an excellent device for individualization of performance. The range of tasks accommodates the novice as well as the advanced performer.

It might be helpful to further explain the range of tasks that are used and show examples of them. The range of tasks in a given activity for a given class can be based on quantitative measures or on qualitative standards. Results of certain activities can be measured quantitatively or with concrete numerical units; ten laps around the field, twenty-five push-ups in a given position, one mile under five minutes, ten out of twelve shots in basketball (10:43).

An example of the quantitative task range is shown in Table I. The purpose, suggested movement, and factors affecting the flexibility quantity at the position are included because they are necessary to fully understand the movement. Table I also shows that a very important feature of the task style of teaching is the need to develop a better insight into the structure of the subject matter which was the development of the flexibility of the trunk.

Table I  
Quantitative Task

Purpose: Development of flexibility of the trunk (laterally)

Suggested Movement: At a straddle position, with varying positions of the arms--lateral bending of the trunk.

Factors Affecting Flexibility Quantity at This Position: (1) Duration--the number of repetitions in bending. (2) Extent--the distance the segment of the body "travels" toward the end flexible position. (3) Fixation of the base. The more fixed the base, the more difficult the bending movement. (4) Lever effect. It changes by moving the arms from the hip to extension above the head.

Task	Developing Factor	Level 1	Level 2
1.	Duration	Alternate sides (6 times to each side)	Alternate sides (12 times to each side)
2.	Duration	Hands on hips (6 times to each side)	Hands on hips (12 times to each side)
3.	Extent	Bend to the side until you feel that the muscles on the other side pull.	Bend to the side slowly beyond the point of feeling the pull.
4.	Base fixation	Perform the above bending movements in a straddle position, each leg at 45-degree angle to the base.	Perform the above with a wider base.
5.	Lever effect	Perform the above with hands on hips.	Place your palms behind your neck.

Source: (10:51).

Table I shows that a very important feature of the task style of teaching is the need to develop a better insight into the structure of the subject matter which was the development of the flexibility of the trunk.

Other activities are usually measured by qualitative standards which are observable: a compact roll can be evaluated only after various qualitative standards have been established for the given class or school. Standards can vary from quality decisions made by the students themselves to Olympic standards. The important point is that a standard or several standards have been established to form the basis for a range of tasks, so that a beginning performer may try to reach a simple level of performance which involves relatively few controls, while the advanced student in the same class may try to reach a higher level of performance (10:45).

A detailed example of the qualitative measure can be shown by the forward roll in the area of gymnastics. First, the forward roll should be examined to determine the different controls of performance which the performer is required to execute in order to be considered a good performer. Second, the teacher must decide on the details of the correct form of the forward roll. This, demands an understanding of this movement, what it is, its purpose, its intrinsic structure, and the possible variations. An examination of this specific movement leads us to the realization that it is a forward rotary motion which can be performed with the following variables affecting its details:

Variable 1: Body posture. Variations: (a) Compact minimum posture)—all joints bent. (b) Extended (maximum posture)—all joints approaching extension, with some fully extended. (c) In between—combinations of a and b.

Variable 2: Plane of motion. Variations: (a) All segments of the body move in one plane. (b) One or more segments move in other planes.



Variable 3: Speed. Variations: Speed variation on a continuum, from the slowest to the fastest (within the safety limitation).

Variable 4: Rhythm. Variations: (a) Fluent unified motion. (b) Fluent un-unified motion. (c) Non-fluent unified motion (*staccato*). (d) Non-fluent un-unified motion (10:52).

Table II shows how the qualitative measure is divided into these variables.

Each variation of the forward roll in each variable can serve as a task to be learned and practiced independently, in varying combinations, and in sequence until the best possible sequence produces the best results for a given performer.

After performing tasks which are used in the task method of teaching, the following steps in learning have actually occurred:

1. The students have learned that being different is not a crime. In fact, they have learned that you recognize individual differences by presenting them with a choice.
2. The students have learned to see themselves as different--they may have even begun to accept their difference (or the different).
3. Each student has had to begin to learn to assess his abilities, accept his present limitations, and operate within them, without necessarily competing constantly with some of his peers who are more advanced.
4. Chances are that because the student has found a place for himself, reinforcement, rather than dissolution, is at work.
5. By performing on his own level, the student has learned to execute and enjoy the activity which otherwise might be out of reach.
6. Having experienced the enormous pleasure of success, the student has learned that he is capable of learning: and he may be motivated to learn again, to learn more.

These are important accomplishments in the educational process, leading the individual toward greater independence (10:45).



Table II  
Qualitative Task

Task	Variable Factor	Variations
1.	Body posture	Compact roll, all joints bent (minimum).
2.	Body posture	Compact roll, all joints bent except one.
3.	Body posture	Compact roll, all possible joints extended (maximum).
4.	Body posture	Compact roll, extended joint or joints on one side.
5.	Plane of motion	While in forward roll (select any of the previous tasks) move one of the body segments in a different direction. Example: Extend your left leg sideways while rolling.
6.	Plane of motion	Alternate sides and parts of the body.
7.	Plane of motion	Change the angle of the direction.
8.	Speed	Perform any of the previous tasks in slow motion.
9.	Speed	Try your slowest. Maintain the accuracy of all the details of the task.
10.	Speed	Try a variety of speeds and find out the comfortable ones for you and those which seem to disturb your performance.
11.	Speed	Try your fastest forward roll, performing any or all of the previous tasks (observe safety).
12.	Rhythm	Perform the whole movement in one continuous fluent motion. Keep the whole movement unified in speed.
13.	Rhythm	Perform a part of the roll fluently in a given rhythm (relatively slowly) and fluently combine with the next part of the roll with relative speed.

Source: (10:53).

The next step in freeing the individual from the teacher and leading him to even further independence is to use another student or partner to help evaluate the student who is performing the task. The partner is entrusted with the observation of the performance of a given task and supplies the partner with information about the "rights" and "wrongs" of the given task. If students know what to look for and how to correct observed errors they gladly and successfully can perform the role of an observer and a corrector.

The anatomy of this reciprocal teaching style will be introduced in three cycles, each cycle more advanced in its task complexity and more advanced in the degree of freedom for both partners. Each cycle will also involve a mode of communication which is freer of the teacher's direct delivery of task instructions. Table III shows the three cycles.

Table III  
Reciprocal Teaching

Cycle Number	Task Complexity	Mode of Communication
1	A single task at a time.	Oral, visual or both.
2	A series of connected tasks concerning the same activity.	Task card (things to look for).
3	A program of tasks concerning a variety of activities.	Task sheet.

Source: (10:72).

Table III also shows the added dimension of the involvement of a partner in the role of an observer, a corrector, and a reinforcer.

Cycle 1 serves as a training exercise for both partners to get used to their new roles. Cycles 2 and 3 actually serve as teaching devices. These two cycles enhance the weaning process for both partners and free the teacher to reach individuals who most need help or advice. Each performer has, virtually, a personal tutor for helping in the task at hand.

Experimentation in Cycle 1 will show an increase in motivation in most students. It is quite clear that in a class of forty students, for example, the teacher alone cannot observe all students and identify all the errors when they occur; but twenty helpers can observe twenty others and see the details of the lesson.

Cycle 2 involves the presentation of several tasks which are part of the same activity and permits the student to experience a longer period of independence in performing and learning a larger quantity of subject matter.

There are two major differences between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2:

1. More tasks must be demonstrated and explained to the class. A reasonable connection among the tasks should exist in the series.
2. The mode of communication must change in order to be as efficient as possible. When a series of tasks is presented to a class verbally and visually, some students will always forget a few of the tasks, and many might forget some of the details. Task cards are suggested as an excellent means of communication.

Task cards serve a triple role: 1) they establish a goal, 2) they offer a reminder of the sequence of tasks and the details to be performed, and 3) they individualize the instruction in classes of varying sizes. Task cards of various sorts are not new to the students.

They perform and follow written instructions in every other subject in classrooms and in laboratories (10:81).

Cycle 3 is conducted in the same manner as Cycle 2, only a task sheet is used instead of a task card.

This reciprocal style of task teaching has been successfully used on the elementary, secondary, and college levels. This is an excellent opportunity to enhance the social climate in the class by creating the situation where one is actually dependent on the help of a peer and receives criticism and evaluation from a peer (1:75).

The task method of teaching can also be utilized by employing the usage of a small group of three or four members. It is not an organizational issue of having the class in small groups which determines the style; it is rather the process of interaction and communication among the members of the group (1:142). This style merely calls for more than two people to partake in the process of participation, observation, mutual correction, and reinforcement.

This style requires a specific designation of the role of each member in the group. If there are three members in a group, No. 1 is the doer, No. 2 is the observer, and No. 3 is the recorder (9:204, 205). If four people participate in the group, roles might be distributed like this: No. 1 is the doer; No. 2 and No. 3 are the observers; and No. 4 is the recorder. When four students are grouped together, the observers can exchange views on their observations which is an excellent way to develop the ability to see details and to improve their own performance (6:177). At the end of a given period, the members change roles.

The values of this process of interaction are:

1. A sense of responsibility develops, or its absence is clearly evident. The concept of peer relationships evolves and unfolds in such a situation. The members of the group are forced to make decisions concerning their peers; this requires a degree of responsibility and dignity of behavior. In its absence, the group will deteriorate, and no task will be executed. In this sense this style serves as an outstanding diagnostic tool for identifying group climate, individual relationships within the group, and potential leadership abilities.
2. A special kind of discipline develops--a discipline which requires self-control in order to survive in the group. An observant teacher will be able to tell whether the apparent discipline is a result of subjugation of the group by one strong individual or a result of mutual understanding and ability to exchange points of view amicably. The important dimension is that a weaning process is in progress--the main disciplinary relationship is not between the student and the teacher but between the student and his peers.
3. A stronger sense of communication develops. Since each member of the group assumes all the different roles, the ability to communicate with others has an opportunity to develop.
4. An ability to analyze seems to emerge in this situation, particularly when there is more than one observer. Inevitably, more than one point of view emerges, and the need to examine alternatives arises. This process helps sharpen observation and decision making.

This style is particularly useful in large classes and with limited facilities. The division of the class into small groups requires less equipment than the partner style, and yet each member of the class is engaged in the learning process in one capacity or another (10:94, 95).

To continue the process of leading the student to independence by using the task method of teaching, the student can learn to evaluate himself by means of an individual program. The results of this type of program are immediate (8:123). The immediacy of the concrete results of performing the tasks can help the student recognize the realities of

his strengths and weaknesses. Occasionally though, it sometimes happens that the awareness of this reality creates a negative behavior response, and in this respect this program can serve as a diagnostic tool to identify the students who need support and more encouragement than the rest of the class. The immediacy of results can, on the other hand, serve as immediate reinforcement and motivation to move on (8:125).

This style of task teaching can furnish a permanent record of where the student began in the activity and the direction and amount of progress which occurred during the learning process. The teacher can identify the place of the student by glancing at the program or by asking the student to perform the checked item or items. This aspect of spot checking will create a feeling that the teacher knows what is going on in the class. This is an important asset of this technique, since it is very easy for the teacher to lose track and get the student lost in a variety of achievements (4:83).

This method can be used with all levels and with large as well as small classes. Experiences in high schools have demonstrated successful execution of individual programs in classes of more than 100 students in volleyball, track and field, developmental movement, and other activities. In fact, teaching by task is a very useful way of teaching large classes because the teacher is freer to move about any point of the gymnasium to observe and to communicate with students, and to be assured that the rest of the class is engaged in performing the task. It has been observed that when a class learns to be more self-reliant, learning and accomplishments increase (10:132).

Time can be properly utilized by the individual program. Since every individual student has his own program, his own targets to reach, and his own area in which to work, little time is wasted on useless waiting, which is physically unrewarding and psychologically demoralizing. It has been shown that classes which are well educated in the values of the program use close to 100 percent of the available time for learning purposes. Learning can continue on an individual basis for up to two hours and more without any lengthy stops or disturbances (10:133).

The discipline problems are also sharply reduced because of the self-involvement in one's own program which creates a new focus for the student himself. This new focus on oneself reduces the chances of students getting involved in activities which are traditionally considered discipline problems. With the reinforcement of the self in this kind of learning and seeking, a new sense of responsibility evolves toward one's role in creating an acceptable social climate in the class, thus the students develop socially because of their interaction with each other.

It must be clear that the designer of an individual program must know the subject matter well. It requires more than just arbitrary selection of movements in a given activity. In order to design a measurable task one must have insight into the subject matter and into the relationship of the specific task to the entire activity, and knowledge of the relative position of the task in the progress of learning that activity (6:224).

Three elements are needed for an individual program which is growing and reaching a specified target. These elements are:

1. The sequential consideration of a given program. There is a need to determine the unique sequence of tasks in every programmed situation.
2. Attention to the size of the interval between tasks. Small tasks are related to the given variable of the activity and are arranged in close intervals--that is, each subsequent task is just a little closer to the target than its predecessor.
3. Immediate built-in reinforcement, which is given to the student by the very fact of succeeding in the performance of the sequential tasks. Small tasks must be selected and arranged in such a sequence that most learners will reach the target after executing all the tasks.

A careful design of tasks which progress step by step within a given program or within a group of programs will actually lead the student to higher achievement in an independent manner (10:127).

All previous styles of employing tasks in a method of teaching have offered some intellectual activity, but it has been somewhat limited. There is one other variation of the task teaching method which breaks this cognitive barrier--the guided discovery style. This style operates under the theory that a student will not begin to inquire unless he needs to find out something. This need to find out is created, aroused, and stimulated by that little mental dissatisfaction which forces the mind to focus on the problem at hand and awakens the possibility of discovery (5:3).

The most fundamental difference between guided discovery and all the previous styles is that in guided discovery the teacher never tells the answer. But in order to implement this teaching style, several behavioral adjustments must be made. First, the teacher needs to make



linguistic adjustments. Instead of using exclamation words, one uses question words. An exclamation connotes authority, something to accept, perhaps without questioning. A question, on the other hand, may have a completely different set of connotations for the student, and a different set of actions may occur such as the following:

1. The student learns that the teacher is interested in what he has to say.
2. He learns that he is expected to give an answer.
3. The expectation to give an answer requires an understanding of the question. One must pay attention in order to hear and understand the question.
4. If the question is relevant, then the student is beginning to be actively involved with the teacher.
5. This involvement is usually a result of the cognitive dissonance created by the question.
6. The cognitive process has begun. The student now must pursue the answer (10:148).

The next adjustment, equally important in preference and impact, is an emotional one. The teacher must wait for the answer to come from the student. The student is the focus, and he must remain so if this process is to continue and succeed.

This behavior of waiting for the response has a tremendous impact on success in learning because the stimuli are so directed and so designed as to produce particular responses--hence, success. When the success is rewarded, the learner is reinforced and is motivated to continue to receive the next stimulus. This next stimulus is also designed to elicit a particular response which is rewarded when produced. Thus begins the cycle of a particular kind of learning: meticulous, economical, and channelled to a specific purpose (10:149).

As a rule of thumb, the teacher should proceed from the general to the specific and relate each question to the specific purpose of the movement (4:294). Every so often it might be necessary to inject an additional question due to the age of the learner, level of word comprehension, and the like. The basic structure of the sequence, however, remains the same.

An example of progressive questioning in guided discovery for physical education is as follows:

Subject matter: Soccer

Specific purpose: To discover the use of the toe-kick in long and high-flying kicks.

Question 1: "What kind of kick is needed when you want to pass the ball to a player who is far from you?"

Anticipated answer: "A long kick!" (Response: "Good!")

Question 2: "Suppose there is a player from the opposing team between you and your teammate."

Anticipated answer: "Then the ball must fly high!" ("Right!" says the teacher.)

Question 3: "Where should the force produced by the foot be applied on the ball in order to raise it off the ground?"

Anticipated answer: "As low as possible!" ("Yes!" responds the teacher.)

Question 4: "Which part of the foot can comfortably get to the lowest part of the ball without interference with direction of the run and its momentum?"

Anticipated answer: "The toes!" ("Very good!" proclaims the teacher.)

Question 5: "Would you like to try it?"

Anticipated answer: "Yes!"

Through this basic structure of a short process of interaction between the questions and the responses, the results which are produced are inevitable. The process will always work because there is an intrinsic relationship between the question and the answer in terms of the stated purpose (10:153).

The following benefits show how the process worked in terms of the stated purpose (to discover the use of the toe-kick in long and high-flying kicks) of the soccer example:

1. The student has learned the physical response as planned by the teacher in the lesson in soccer.
2. The student has learned the relationship between the flight of the ball and his foot, the rudimentary mechanics involved, and the place of this kick in the tactics of soccer.
3. The student has learned that he can discover these things by himself.
4. Learning psychologists believe that when this process is employed frequently and purposefully, the learner will reach the point of asking the questions by himself whenever a new situation arises and the learner will be able to transfer this questioning to a thinking and discovery process (10:154).

By employing the guided discovery method, the teacher should recognize that the students' most obvious progress has occurred in an intellectual plane. It can also be assumed that as a result of this cognitive process, carefully guarded by frequent reinforcements, the students' emotional development reaches a higher level. Continuous success in "correct" and acceptable responses helps strengthen confidence in oneself and enhances one's self image (10:181). The student also develops socially because he directly interacts with the teacher when he answers the questions. Consequently, by using the guided discovery method, the teacher can see the student develop physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually.

## SUMMARY

A comparison of the two methods of teaching can be made in terms of their disadvantages and advantages. The command method of teaching has several disadvantages. They are as follows: 1) the method limits the organization of the class since the students primarily stand in a designated area or in a certain spot, 2) the students' performance is directed by precise instructions from the teacher, 3) the student is basically a passive recipient of all stimuli and in actuality only accepts and equals the demonstrator's performance, 4) the students' responses are supposed to equal the teacher's actions or commands which allows no creativity to develop in the student, and 5) the command method allows little chance for social, emotional, or mental development due to little interaction of the students with each other while learning skills.

The main advantage of the command method is that it does allow learning to take place, however, only the exact action that is prescribed.

The task method of teaching has insignificant disadvantages which are usually in all reality, limitations of the teacher not the method. They are as follows: 1) this method may take more time to present because the teacher does not know how to eliminate improper responses to the task, and 2) it may require a greater, detailed knowledge of the subject matter which would indicate more preparation time needed for teachers, especially if they are insufficiently prepared.

However, the task method has many advantages which far outweigh its disadvantages. The advantages are as follows: 1) it is successful

with large classes and all age groups, 2) the students develop emotionally and socially because of a greater interaction with the other students, 3) intellectual development occurs as a result of having to understand the task so that the student can perform it by himself, 4) discipline problems are sharply reduced because of self-involvement, 5) time is properly utilized since the student does not waste time waiting in long lines, 6) learning can continue for a lengthy time since it is done on an individual basis, 7) motivation is increased as a result of individual involvement and self direction, and 8) there are several styles of the task teaching method--teaching by a simple task, reciprocal teaching, use of the small group, individual program, and guided discovery--which shows the versatility of the method.

#### CONCLUSION

After careful examination of the facts of this report, it can be concluded that the task method of teaching does lend itself to an atmosphere which allows the student to develop physically, socially, emotionally, and mentally. It can also be stated that it presently seems to be a more successful method to use in respect to total development than the command method of teaching.

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A COMPARISON OF THE COMMAND AND TASK METHODS OF TEACHING  
IN RELATION TO PHYSICAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTION

by

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B. S. E., Kansas State Teachers College, 1967

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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This report compares two methods of teaching physical education: the command method and the task method. The command style of teaching consists of teacher demonstration, explanation, student execution or imitation and teacher evaluation. The task method of teaching is the teacher's presentation of a task by demonstration and/or explanation and/or directed questioning and the performance of the activity by the students on their own.

The purpose of this report was to compare the two methods of teaching and through this comparison show how limited the command method is in relation to developing the individual physically, emotionally, socially, and intellectually.

In order to complete this study, an investigation of literature was conducted from sources located in Farrell Library on the Kansas State University campus and the Department of Physical Education at the University.

A comparison of the two methods of teaching can be made in terms of their disadvantages and advantages. The command method of teaching has the following disadvantages: 1) the method limits the organization of the class since the students primarily stand in a designated area or in a certain spot, 2) the students' performance is directed by precise instructions from the teacher, 3) the student is basically a passive recipient of all stimuli and in actuality only accepts and equals the demonstrator's performance, 4) the students' responses are supposed to equal the teacher's actions or commands which allows no creativity to develop in the student, and 5) the command method allows little chance



for social, emotional, or mental development due to little interaction of the students with each other while learning skills.

The main advantage of the command method is that it does allow learning to take place; however, only the exact action that is prescribed.

The task method of teaching has insignificant disadvantages which are usually in all reality, limitations of the teacher not the method. They are as follows: 1) this method may take more time to present because the teacher does not know how to eliminate improper responses to the task, and 2) it may require a greater detailed knowledge of the subject matter which would indicate more preparation time needed for teachers, especially if they are insufficiently prepared.

However, the task method has many advantages which far outweigh its disadvantages. The advantages are as follows: 1) it is successful with large classes and all age groups, 2) the students develop emotionally and socially because of a greater interaction with the other students, 3) intellectual development occurs as a result of having to understand the task so that the student can perform it by himself, 4) discipline problems are sharply reduced because of self-involvement, 5) time is properly utilized since the student does not waste time waiting in long lines, 6) learning can continue for a lengthy time since it is done on an individual basis, 7) motivation is increased as a result of individual involvement and self direction, and 8) there are several styles of the task teaching method--teaching by a simple task, reciprocal teaching, use of the small group, the individual program, and guided discovery--which shows the versatility of the method.

After careful examination of the facts of this report, it can be concluded that the task method of teaching does lend itself to an atmosphere which allows the student to develop physically, socially, emotionally, and mentally. It can also be stated that it presently seems to be a more successful method to use in respect to total development than the command method of teaching.