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Unveiling the lived experiences of non-bodily kinesthetic students in performance-based assessment in PE subjects

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Abstract

This study aimed to unveil the lived experiences of non-bodily kinesthetic students in performance-based assessment in PE subjects. The participants were 14 students, seven (7) for in-depth interview and another seven (7) participants for focus group discussion, under the Department of Teacher Education at UM Tagum College. This study used the qualitative method, utilizing a phenomenological approach. The 15 questions from the semistructured interview guide were used to collect the data. The study's results revealed that participants experienced difficulty in the execution of basic skills in sports and dances, lack of confidence and performance anxiety, and feelings of inadequacy and insecurity. Furthermore, most participants used various coping mechanisms to overcome such challenges. The adaptive strategies mentioned were different forms of motivation, constant practice, and relaxation before the performance. The consistency of the results suggests that teachers could modify their strategies and simplify methods of instruction in teaching physical education to accommodate the needs of these students, considering their difficulties in using their bodies skillfully to perform basic skills of activities such as sports and dance. Physical education teachers could also apply strategies such as positive reinforcement and innovative activities to boost students' learning motivation to participate more enthusiastically in physical education class while developing their kinesthetic ability.

Keywords: Non-bodily kinesthetic students, performance-based assessment, and physical education

Introduction

The human body is more than just a complex shape organized with structure. It is also considered a tool for recognizing an individual's innermost personality, abilities, and ambitions, creating different reactions from others because of its unique characteristics. As claimed by Gardner, individual differences indicate human beings' multiple intelligences, and each has varied degrees of strength (Arnold & Fonseca, 2004) ^[1]. In his theory, Multiple Intelligence, Gardner explains the broad range of abilities that humans possess by grouping their capabilities into nine broad categories, including bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, which refers to a person's ability to use his body and its parts to express creative products through body movement, control, and expression (Suhadi *et al.*, 2020) ^[7].

Furthermore, several studies support Gardner's assertion that every person possesses multiple intelligences, including the research of Ahvan and Pour in 2016. It is concluded that some individuals have low kinesthetic intelligence based on these empirical findings. These individuals cannot use their bodies skillfully, express ideas and feelings, and use their physiques to manipulate or produce things. Moreover, the central tenet of kinesthetic learning is that students learn best when exposed to simulations and hands-on activities involving full-body movement. This is essential knowledge needed when conducting performance-based activities, especially in Physical Education (PE) subjects. However, as aforementioned, some students cannot use their bodies skillfully during performance-based assessments. This study describes these learners as non-bodily kinesthetic students or individuals with low kinesthetic intelligence. A study reported that some students find that most performance-based assessments are too difficult to perform and are beyond their capabilities (Lampe Team, 2016) ^[4].

Besides, Arhin (2015) [8] defines performance-based assessment as a learning system that evaluates students' capability by demonstrating skills in which they combine knowledge and abilities from many areas to perform an activity or task. Non-bodily kinesthetic students are viewed to have difficulties performing certain activities or tasks, such as sports and dance. These students deem physical activities a huge challenge in their studies, as many fail to perform at the level required to receive a passing remark due to criteria that are outside the range of their abilities.

More importantly, Physical Education is a discipline whose primary learning component incorporates physical activities to assist students in learning. In-depth, Bailey (2018) [9] states that "this subject does not entail acquiring physical activities only; however, it more holds a learning that promotes whole personal growth, including movement, mental, social and other aspects." With this fact, it is vital to keep students engaged in physical activities through these performance-based assessments in PE subjects to accomplish the abovementioned achievement and development. This study will establish awareness and enlightenment about the shared experiences of these non-bodily kinesthetic students, and the researcher will be able to draw implications for the improvement of the current educational system of the faculty to attend to the needs of this type of learner. Despite their shortcomings due to their distinct characteristics as humans, their needs are addressed through careful consideration and planning by the teacher to help the instructors of PE subjects achieve the target learning outcomes.

Materials and Methods

This study was phenomenological, prompting the researcher to utilize the interview as the research instrument for data collection, particularly IDI and FGD. The current study explores relevant issues about students' lived experiences, urging the researchers to employ interviews to pursue in depth information about the topic. Furthermore, the researchers utilized researcher-made interview questions that elicited relevant information concerning the experiences of non-bodily kinesthetic students. They were subjected to expert validation to ascertain the instrument's appropriateness. The participants of this study were 2nd-year students of the UM Tagum College under the Department of Teacher Education (DTE). A total of 14 students served as the key informants: seven for the in-depth interview (IDI) and seven for the focus group discussion (FGD).

Results

The challenges of non-bodily kinesthetic students

Theme 1: Difficulty in the execution and acquisition of basic skills in sports

Sports are team and individual activities that enable students to form social relationships, learn sportsmanship, have fun, and are mainly involved in physical activity to develop their physical fitness. However, it was revealed in this study that some students had difficulties performing the basic skills in sports, such as volleyball, during PE class as they had trouble in terms of acquisition and execution. The participants expressed that they struggled to perform the basic skills in sports, particularly serving and receiving,

because they were not flexible enough to acquire the said skills successfully. They also shared that it takes a lot of time and effort to perform the task given as they cannot carry out body movements easily.

Theme 2: The dilemma of mastering and executing choreography in dance

Dance is an activity that requires masterful, rhythmically coordinated, and expressive movements. It is a necessary component of a student's movement education. This study discovered that some students found dancing challenging during performance-based assessments in PE class because they had trouble learning and performing choreography. The participants acknowledged that because they were not interested in this activity, they found it difficult to learn the choreography of dances like hip-hop. Because of their stiff bodies, the students had significant difficulty mastering and performing the steps.

Theme 3: Lack of confidence due to incompetence

Students who lack confidence do not believe in their capability to achieve their goals, leading them to be unwilling to participate in learning or seize opportunities for academic growth. This study determined that non-bodily kinesthetic students cannot do well on performance-based assessments in physical education because of their low confidence. Due to their lack of dance experience, students admitted to feeling self-conscious and shy during their performances. They were notably less adept at making complex dancing moves than their classmates, who were skilled at manipulating their bodies. They eventually began to question their abilities and feel as though they were lacking in some way as a person.

Theme 4: Anxiety during and before performances

Anxiety symptoms are common in students and adolescents and are seen as a factor that can impair functioning. This study discovered that non-bodily kinesthetic students frequently experience anxiety before and during performance-based assessments in physical education classes. They expressed how nerve-racking it is to perform activities in PE, such as sports and dance. Students admitted that when they feel anxious, they often forget what they have practiced, which causes them to mess up their performances.

Theme 5: Feelings of inadequacy and insecurity

An inferiority complex is a feeling of inadequacy or insecurity—a sense that one is not as good, relevant, or intelligent as others are. Students who experience these feelings may appear in situations where they feel less competent and intelligent than their peers. Within the same context, participants in this study expressed feelings of inferiority as they felt discouraged and sensed that they were not as good as their classmates regarding the level of competence expected of them during the performance-based assessments in PE subjects. The students expressed how bad their feelings were when their classmates could perform well while they were not. Because they were not fit and did not have a good physique, they were embarrassed to perform and felt pressure from their classmates who were excellent at physical activities like dancing.

The coping mechanisms of non-bodily kinesthetic students

Theme 1: Self-Affirmation, peer and extrinsic motivation

Motivation is a crucial psychological concept in education that encourages and supports students to study and improve in class. With the challenges that non-bodily kinesthetic students experience in performance based assessments in PE subjects, in this study, the participants shared that through self-motivation, extrinsic motivation, and peer support, they manage to overcome those obstacles. The participants expressed that they were driven to perform because of external forces that pushed them to make efforts like getting high grades. Their motivation also came from the words of encouragement from their classmates and teachers. Besides the help from the people around them, through self-affirmation, non-bodily students in PE were able to handle their struggles, as believing in themselves was an excellent fuel for them to perform better.

Theme 2: Constant practice by exerting time and effort in the process

People must practice, receive feedback, and modify to master a new skill and improve performance. In this study, non-bodily students revealed that constant practice is one of their coping mechanisms to conquer their shortcomings in different activities in PE subjects. The participants emphasized that through practice, they were able to perform better during their dance performances and the execution of skills in sports. By exerting more time and effort, even practicing in their homes, this coping mechanism helps this type of student master skills in sports and dancing. They admitted how constant practice made their performances better and more successful.

Theme 3: Relaxation to manage anxiety before the performance

A student practiced their dance choreography and execution of skills in sports in their PE class several times until it became completely automated. However, when they performed it in front of the class, they could not make it perfect. Such circumstances are frequently referred to as "choking under pressure" (hence referred to as "choking"). This expression refers to performance declines under pressure despite an individual's best efforts to perform effectively. With that being said, there are techniques students can use to lessen and control the stress and anxiety they experience before giving their final presentation. Participants in this study admitted that relaxing is one of their strategies for lowering nervousness before performances.

The Insights of non-bodily kinesthetic students

Theme 1: Opportunity for Self-assessment

Self-assessment is a student-centered method allowing students to participate in learning. Students improve their abilities as they assess and demonstrate their understanding of content during the process. In the context of this study, participants stated that they could evaluate themselves through performance-based assessments in PE subjects, which helped them recognize certain crucial things, like their strengths and limitations. Participants acknowledged that they have weaknesses in several areas, such as athletic and dancing performances, but they were also able to see

some areas of potential in them. Additionally, it was stated that through physical education, they concluded that it was best to play sports while one was young to develop one's kinesthetic ability, which will benefit one in the end.

Theme 2: Friendship is built through performances in PE

According to the participants in this study, physical education allows them to connect with their classmates during their performances. Through their participation in physical education classes, the participants in this study, non-bodily kinesthetic students, could make new friends, communicate, come together, and work as a team. The students agreed that participating in physical education activities allowed them to meet new people, collaborate with them, effectively communicate their shared ideas, and complete the task at hand.

Theme 3: Perceived performances in PE as holistic

Physical education, sports, and other forms of physical activity, as stated by Cardinal (2016), are widely acknowledged to provide numerous benefits to young people. As expressed by the participants of this study, the benefits of physical education are not limited to health and fitness. This program also enables students to develop desirable attitudes like self-discipline and cultivates favorable feelings toward physical activity and its relevance in leading a fulfilling life. The students affirmed that activities in PE offered them opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills; on top of that, they shared that the program also developed them holistically. Also, they saw performance-based PE assessments as one of the preparatory and training grounds for their future endeavors as teachers.

Discussion

The Challenges of Non-bodily kinesthetic students

The first theme of reveals difficulty in the execution and acquisition of basic skills in sports. Motor skills are required in sports since the activity requires voluntary control over the movements of joints and body segments to attain a goal (Singh, 2018) ^[10]. Furthermore, there is a concept known as movement competence, which refers to a person's ability to control, coordinate, and perform movement skills efficiently, adapt, and combine movement skills to create practical answers thru an extensive range of physical activity and sporting contexts. However, according to Elder (2016), some students struggle to acquire and master fundamental motor skills because they are unable to move their bodies in a coordinated manner. Even in Rudd *et al.*'s (2020) ^[6] study, poor levels of movement competence among school-aged children were identified, prompting teachers and institutions to address crucial concerns to support all areas of students' learning. The second theme pertains to the dilemma of mastering and executing choreography in dance. Learning to dance becomes much more enjoyable and exciting when students pick up choreography more quickly. Contrarily, it can be frustrating when one forgets the movements and gets confused while practicing. Mastering and executing choreography in dances takes a lot of time and practice, especially for those students who need to improve at dancing. Muscle memory, a completely distinct mental process from recalling factual or intellectual information, is required to pick up and memorize choreography quickly. In this study, the theme

suggests that students found it hard to get the dance right since their bodies were not flexible, and they had difficulties memorizing steps. In a real-life scenario, this is an observable situation if the students are not inclined to dance. However, it is noticeable that non-dancer students can learn by asking for help from their classmates and teachers whenever they are having a hard time with some aspects of the given activity. The third theme reveals lack of confidence due to incompetence. Lack of self-confidence is a problem that baffles many students. Poor self-confidence management contributes to subpar performance and generalized problems with focus, motivation, and physical health. This condition leaves students doubting their ability to succeed, making them hesitant to show their full potential during performances. The findings of this investigation imply that a lack of self-confidence drags down the ability of students to perform well, as self-doubt dominates them. If not handled properly, this may take a toll on them as individuals and significantly affect their performance. Thus, to overcome this challenge, learning how to control one's thoughts before and during performances and being resilient enough to manage themselves can help students. The fourth theme pertains to anxiety during and before performances. Anxiety before and during the performance is inevitable, especially for students not used to performing in front of a crowd. The fear of failing a task before it even starts might cause performance anxiety. They could think that embarrassment would follow failure. Many people experience this, and students who are not kinesthetically intelligent are not an exemption. It hinders the students from giving their best results through poor performance. Learning how to compose oneself before performances to avoid messing up in front of the audience is a helpful mechanism to overcome this situation. The fifth theme reveals feelings of inadequacy and insecurity. Feelings of inadequacy include a general perception that we are not enough-maybe we feel we cannot do things right and there is something that we lack. Students tend to feel it in their PE subjects, especially during performances. Students, especially those who are not excellent in sports and dance, tend to belittle themselves because they perceive that their classmates are much better than they are. Consequently, their motivation to complete a task wane because they feel inadequate, and their perspective on their abilities is skewed. This, combined with the feeling of insecurity towards their classmates, deteriorates students' performance. With that being said, self-acceptance is the first thing one must practice to ease their feelings of being inferior to others.

The coping mechanisms of non-bodily kinesthetic students

The first theme reveals self-affirmation, peer and extrinsic motivation. Self-motivation is defined as an internal drive that pushes one to go on. Main and Dillard (2012) asserted that it encourages more remarkable behavior change and is attributed to self-affirmation, one strategy to make the self-more driven and goal-oriented. Moreover, extrinsic motivation is also found as a drive to increase students' participation in activities such as sports and dance, as it refers to external factors that employ incentives and rewards to influence behavior for students to complete the learning task (Ryan & Deci, 2017) ^[11]. In the case of this study, despite the hardships, non-bodily kinesthetic students are driven to perform to get good grades. Additionally, peers may be a factor in PE class that affects how much the students participate in physical activities. The second theme

pertains to constant practice by exerting time and effort in the process. Constant practice greatly helps in the acquisition of skills, and there are various factors associated with motor learning, such as the amount, types, and schedules of practice. It is hard for students to quickly learn skills needed for performance due to their low kinesthetic ability. However, they can achieve a better performance outcome with constant practice and by exerting time and effort in the process. Indeed, practice is essential before performance since it is the only way to become proficient in the proper execution of skills, especially unfamiliar ones. Even in other fields of activity, practice is a vital routine that one must undergo to meet the expectations of the people around them and achieve recognition. The third theme reveals relaxation to manage anxiety before the performance. The prevalence of anxiety before school performance was examined. It is reported that the thought of performing in front of people, particularly a performance where evaluation is present, causes anxiety, nervousness, and choking among students (Mazzone *et al.*, 2017) ^[12]. According to Mesagno and Beckman (2017) ^[13], choking is a reported result of heightened anxiety brought on by a pressure environment. Due to this condition, the performances of students are affected. Thus, it was reported how relaxation helped learners to overcome this feeling.

The insights of Non-bodily kinesthetic students

The first theme pertains to opportunity for self-assessment. In this study, the theme implies that through self-assessment, learners can evaluate their skills, particularly in those areas where they lack them, and think of different strategies and interventions to address their shortcomings. Self-assessment allows students to objectively evaluate their performance and know the extent of their abilities, allowing them to act on improving aspects where they have shortcomings. Moreover, opportunities to learn and grow are everywhere, and self-assessment is a helpful method to use to determine whether we are picking up new knowledge, skills, and abilities from what we are seeing, hearing, and experiencing. The second theme reveals friendship is built through performances in PE. The aforementioned theme suggests that performances in PE allow students to establish friendships and camaraderie along the way. Even for non-bodily kinesthetic students, despite their struggles in different activities in PE, they expressed how performances in PE allow them to meet new people and get to know their classmates more during their practice. Furthermore, regardless of one's ability, having friends whom you can lean on and relate to is a factor that every student should engage with to ease the burden of facing all the challenges alone since school is not just a place to learn academics but also an avenue to socialize and build relationships with people. The third theme reveals perceived performances in PE as holistic. According to research, the benefits of physical education vary greatly and can influence areas such as physical, social, and emotional development as well as cognitive and academic achievement (Biddle *et al.*, 2019) ^[2]. Furthermore, physical education in schools provides a setting for students to participate in regular and structured physical activity. One common justification for incorporating physical education into the school curriculum is improving children's health and fitness (Zeigler, 2017) ^[14].

Conclusion

This study's investigation is necessary and relevant, as the findings presented contribute to the phenomenon being

discussed. It deepens the current understanding of the experiences of non-bodily kinesthetic students, as this research explicitly explores their challenges in PE subjects throughout the end of the semester, the coping. To begin with, regarding the challenges experienced by the participants, there were five (5) major critical themes developed from the data collected, such as; (1) Difficulty in the Execution and Acquisition of Basic Skills in Sports, (2) The Dilemma of Mastering and Executing Choreography in Dances, (3) Lack of Confidence Due to Incompetence, (4) Anxiety During and Before Performances, (5) Feelings of Inadequacy and Insecurity. Besides, three (3) essential themes have emerged from the statement of the participants regarding their coping mechanisms; (1) Self-Affirmation, Peer and Extrinsic Motivation, (2) Constant Practice by Exerting Time and Effort in the Process, (3) Relaxation to Manage Anxiety prior the Performance. Moreover, after scrutinizing the insights of the participants about their experiences in performance-based assessments in PE subjects, three (3) significant themes are revealed, such as; (1) Opportunity for Self-assessment, (2) Friendship is Built through Performances in PE Subjects, (3) Perceived Performances in PE as Holistic. Moreover, this phenomenological study accomplished the stated purpose of the research, which was to contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of physical education, particularly to fill in information about the experiences of non-bodily kinesthetic students in performance-based assessments in PE subjects since this topic is relatively new in the field of PE.

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