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Limited research exists on the best practices for remote physical activity course instruction, highlighting the need to identify effective instructional strategies to promote student engagement and learning. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore instructor enthusiasm and feedback during fitness-based physical activity courses in a remote learning environment at a Midwest university. Data collection included interviews, focus groups, self-reflection, and observations, using the Collaborative Qualitative Data Analysis to guide the data analysis process. Six themes were generated for instructor enthusiasm: nonverbal communication, instructor's energy, vocal delivery, learning environment, instructor's demeanor, and topic-related enthusiasm. Five themes were generated for feedback: encouraging feedback, nonverbal cues, performance-related feedback, direction of feedback, and outside of class feedback. However, two themes were ultimately excluded from the final list of recommendations: instructor enthusiasm related to the learning environment and direction of feedback. This study provides a valuable starting point for understanding the instructional strategies needed in remote physical activity courses. However, to establish comprehensive guidelines, future research should investigate these aspects on a larger scale.

WHAT YOU SAY AND HOW YOU SAY IT: INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR  
DEMONSTRATING ENTHUSIASM AND FEEDBACK IN REMOTE  
SYNCHRONOUS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY COURSES

by

Jessica L. Baldwin

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Approved by

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Dr. Michael Hemphill  
Committee Chair

## DEDICATION

*To my husband, Collin, for all your unwavering support and patience, the countless hours you dedicated to taking on more so that I could pursue this degree. For lending a compassionate ear as I vented my frustrations and being the wisest sounding board for all my ideas. And, most importantly, for keeping me sane with your infectious humor that never failed to brighten even the darkest days.*

*To my daughter, Isabella/Izzy/Nugget, you are the light that inspires me to push beyond my limits and strive for greater heights. I am honored to be your mom, watching you grow and learn with each passing day. Your boundless curiosity and inquisitive nature are gifts that will carry you far. May you continue to explore, learn, and be the extraordinary person you are destined to become. Remember always, I love you the most infinity, more than sugar and that!*

*To my parents, Colleen and Duane, for the unwavering encouragement and love that has carried me through all the ups and downs of life. Your constant support has been invaluable. Your willingness to take Izzy wherever she needed to go has been a tremendous help. And, of course, for spending time with and playing with the two craziest dogs, Moo Moo and Alex.*

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation written by Jessica L. Baldwin has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Michael Hemphill

Committee Members

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Ben Dyson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Greg Daniels

June 7, 2023  
Date of Acceptance by Committee

April 27, 2023  
Date of Final Oral Examination

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## CHAPTER I: PROJECT OVERVIEW

Online learning is a growing trend, with the number of colleges offering online courses doubling since 2012 (D'Amato, 2020). Nevertheless, Kinesiology has been slower than other disciplines on offering courses and programs in an online platform (Graber & Chodzko-Zajko, 2014). Given Kinesiology courses' popularity, offering them in an online environment would be attractive to students (Bryan, 2014). In addition, physical activity courses help students develop an active lifestyle that continues into adulthood (Adams & Brynteson, 1992; Casebolt et al., 2015; Casebolt et al., 2017). SHAPE America (2022) updated their guidelines for higher education physical activity programs to incorporate hybrid and online learning. Nonetheless, the recommendations do not specifically differentiate between these formats, nor do they clarify if online learning refers solely to asynchronous approaches or encompasses synchronous methods as well. Instructing in an online environment is difficult (Kim & Gurvitch, 2020), especially when there are not well-established guidelines for instructing fitness-based activities like exercises, dance moves, and motor skills (Daum & Buschner, 2018) in a remote, synchronous environment. Two instructional strategies listed in the in-person physical activity guidelines, that the instructor controls, are instructor enthusiasm and feedback (NASPE, 2009). Instructor enthusiasm has been shown to motivate, energize, and encourage student learning (Collins, 1978; Keller et al., 2014; Parson, 2001; Patrick et al., 2000). Instructor feedback has been noted as a common (Lee et al., 1993) and critical function (Nicaise et al., 2006) of teaching in our field and is an effective technique for student learning (Hawkins et al., 1985; Landin et al., 1986; Landin et al., 1989; Lee et al., 1993), student achievement (Nicaise et al., 2006), and intrinsic motivation (Badmi et al., 2011). Therefore, this study will focus on identifying instructional strategies physical activity instructors use to motivate, encourage, and improve performance in their

students and establish instructional recommendations on enthusiasm and feedback for instructing physical activity courses in remote, synchronous learning environments. Research findings indicate a need for instructional best practices, with an increased focus on remote instruction and further investigation into appropriate online teaching methods (Centeio et al., 2021). Additionally, experts have projected remote learning will continue to grow post-pandemic (Schwartz et al., 2020). The purpose of this case study is to explore instructional strategies used by university physical activity course instructors in remote learning environments. The expected outcomes are to identify and establish recommendations for instructor enthusiasm and feedback in physical activity courses to improve educational quality and effectiveness.

### **Literature Review**

Higher education courses offered in a digital learning environment have been steadily increasing in the US since 2004 (Palvia et al., 2018), but recently the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this process for many programs and courses (D'Amato, 2020). Courses can be delivered in a synchronous or asynchronous format. Remote learning is identified as students and instructors meeting synchronously for course instruction, whereas online learning is asynchronous, allowing students more flexibility as to when they access and complete the course content (University of Nebraska Omaha [UNO], 2020). Currently, most research in this learning environment has focused on content-based classes. However, similar to other disciplines, Kinesiology has begun adopting digital learning (Graber & Chodzko-Zajko, 2014) and some courses present a unique challenge as it requires students to learn through movement.

Kinesiology courses are highly popular among college students (Bryan, 2014). Many kinesiology programs offer physical activity courses that allow students to be physically active as they earn credits towards their degree. Physical activity courses are fitness- or sports-based

classes provided to students as electives or graduation requirements (Lackman et al., 2015). According to Lackman et al. (2015), fitness-based activity courses are intended to increase students' fitness levels and knowledge to prepare them for a lifetime of physical activity. These courses are shown to be beneficial to students' health throughout their lives, as students who complete more physical activity courses are more likely to maintain the lifestyle post-graduation (Adams & Brynteson, 1992; Casebolt et al., 2015; Casebolt et al., 2017). Still, for students to transfer the knowledge and skills learned into their lives, the courses must be taught using effective pedagogy.

Instruction focuses on promoting student learning and achievements. In K-12 physical education, a common conceptual framework used to achieve student learning outcomes comprises three learning domains: cognitive, which encompasses knowledge of movement; affective, covering attitudes, motivation, and behaviors related to movement; and psychomotor, involving physical skills (SHAPE, 2015). A parallel can be drawn between K-12 physical education instruction and higher education physical activity instruction, as both can be considered conceptual physical education. This shared framework is applicable as it fosters the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors that promote physically active lifestyles (Casebolt et al., 2017; Leenders et al., 2003).

In 2022, SHAPE America revised their *Appropriate Instructional Practice Guidelines for Higher Education Physical Activity Programs*. This document serves as guidance for face-to-face, hybrid, and online learning for instructional physical activity programs and provides higher education professionals with effective teaching strategies. Within the document, the organization offers guidelines for instructional strategies aimed at helping teachers deliver high-quality instruction. An emphasis is placed on the role of enthusiasm and feedback in these strategies. By

fostering engaging learning environments and providing constructive, timely feedback, educators can effectively support student growth and development (SHAPE, 2022).

Instructor enthusiasm has been shown to motivate, energize, and encourage student learning and achievement (Keller et al., 2014; Kunter et al., 2013; Murry, 2007; Parson, 2001; Patrick et al., 2000; Rosenshire, 1970). Enthusiasm has positively promoted student achievement by increasing intrinsic motivation (Patrick et al., 2000), attention (Bettencourt et al., 1983), and behavior adoption (Frenzel et al., 2009). Carlisle and Phillips (1984) conducted a study on the impact of enthusiasm on preservice physical education teachers and discovered that teachers who were more enthusiastic spent more time on instruction than their less enthusiastic counterparts. However, it remains unclear whether teachers exhibit the same enthusiastic behaviors when instructing physical activity in any setting, whether it be in-person or digitally, or if they adopt different approaches.

Enthusiasm can be categorized into two types: displayed and experienced (Keller et al., 2016). Instructors can demonstrate displayed enthusiasm through nonverbal expressiveness, such as vocal delivery, eye contact, demonstrative gestures, facial expressions, body movements, and energy level (Bettencourt et al., 1983; Collins, 1978; Murray, 1983, 2007; Patrick et al., 2000). On the other hand, experienced enthusiasm relates to the enjoyment and pleasure a teacher experiences while instructing a class (Kunter et al., 2008). There are two dimensions: topic-related, which pertains to the excitement about the subject being instructed, and activity-related enthusiasm, which is excitement about teaching itself (Kunter et al., 2008; Kunter et al., 2011). Displayed and experienced enthusiasm are not mutually exclusive but complementary to one another.

Feedback is another commonly used instructional strategy. Even though there are inconsistencies in the relationship between feedback and student achievement, researchers and educators have accepted it as an essential element in learning skills and have established guidelines (Lee et al., 1993). Feedback, which supplies information about a student's movement to affirm or enhance performance, plays a crucial role in learning (Chen, 2001; Lee et al., 1993; Nunes et al., 2020; Parson, 2001; Silverman et al., 1992). As Jeong and So (2020) noted, "Immediate feedback is needed to motivate students to learn and strengthen their active class attitude" (p. 74). It has been observed that more effective teachers offer a greater amount of feedback (DeKnop, 1986; Phillips & Carlisle, 1983). There are eight types of feedback are recognized: positive, negative, neutral, descriptive, prescriptive, corrective, affective, and comparative (Silverman et al., 1992).

SHAPE America's 2022 guidelines for higher education physical activity programs include hybrid and online learning but lack clarity on format distinctions and teaching behaviors for effective enthusiasm and feedback conveyance. The lack of detailed guidelines and support for remote instruction, coupled with the discipline's lagging research on effective instruction, challenge Kinesiology faculty's readiness for digital learning environments (Kim & Gurvitch, 2020). Given the growth of remote learning, there's a critical need for recommendations on how physical activity instructors can demonstrate enthusiasm and provide feedback to boost teaching effectiveness.

The need for studies focusing on synchronous, remote instruction in our field is currently high due to the recent events caused by the COVID-19 pandemic ("Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic," 2020). Experts have projected remote learning will continue to grow post-pandemic (Schwartz et al., 2020). As more courses in our discipline shift into a remote learning

environment, there is a clear need to provide faculty with strategies for instruction. By identifying the behaviors and techniques physical activity instructors use, instructors can modify and improve educational quality.

### **Purpose Statement and Aims**

The purpose of this study is to identify the instructional strategies and develop recommendations at a Midwest university for instructor enthusiasm and feedback during fitness-based physical activity in a remote learning environment. Therefore, this study aims to:

Aim #1: Identify the strategies instructors use to demonstrate enthusiasm and provide feedback in fitness-based remote, synchronous physical activity courses.

Aim #2: Develop recommendations on enthusiasm and feedback for physical activity instructors to use in fitness-based remote, synchronous courses.

### **Methods**

The aims of this study were addressed using a qualitative research design in the form of a holistic, exploratory single case study. Case study research “investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-world context” (Yin, 2018, p. 15) and involves collecting rich data using several sources of evidence and perspectives (Hamilton & Corbett-Whittier, 2013).

### **Researcher Positionality**

Researcher positionality is a key element of effective qualitative research as it’s necessary for the researcher to fully examine and understand their beliefs to alleviate biases (Smith et al., 2021). Additionally, with an Ed.D. dissertation of practice, Lochmiller and Lester (2015) noted, “a practitioner focuses on understanding localized problems of practice through in-depth inquiry” (p. 3). For this reason, transparency is of the utmost importance due to the

researcher's insider (emic) connection to the site and participants and as the principal instrument for the collection and analysis of data (Smith et al., 2021). The full research positionalality is available in Appendix G.

## **Setting**

This study was conducted at a metropolitan university in the Midwest that began offering remote physical activity courses in the summer of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, the department has offered 36 remote physical activity courses. This study only includes remote learning fitness-based physical activity courses. Fitness-based physical activity courses focus on increasing students' fitness levels and knowledge to prepare them for a lifetime of physical activity (Lackman et al., 2015). Data were collected on three remote physical activity courses during the Fall semester of 2021: Zumba ( $n=1$ ) and Yoga I ( $n=2$ ), both designed for beginners. All physical activity courses met twice a week for a total of 50 minutes per class. Further details about each course are provided in Appendix A. Moreover, Appendix B contains comprehensive information about the department hosting the physical activity courses, as well as the Zumba instructor's physical environment.

## **Participants**

This study involved part-time and full-time instructors teaching remote physical activity courses, along with 13 students from these courses. Students were recruited during class for a focus group, incentivized by a \$10 digital gift card. The instructor was recruited via email, and students on Zoom during their physical activity class, both in 2021. Detailed study information was provided at recruitment, including inclusion criteria, purpose, data collection, confidentiality, and time commitment. The study was approved by the University of North Carolina Greensboro's IRB.

## **Data Collection**

Yin (2018) describes case study research as an in-depth investigation of real-world context. For case studies, this involves collecting an array of evidence from several sources. Four sources of evidence used in this study include observations, interviews, reflection, and focus groups.

### ***Observation***

After obtaining informed consent from instructors, classes were audio-video recorded via Zoom or Quicktime Player for observations. In this exploratory project, descriptive field notes documented instructors' behaviors, instruction, and prompts for enthusiasm and feedback. The Schatzman and Strauss (1973) model guided field note organization through three steps: (a) observational notes, (b) theoretical/interpretive notes, and (c) methodological notes. Each course was recorded thrice, with one observation randomly selected for documentation.

### ***Interviews***

Utilizing a semi-structured approach, interviews involved pre-prepared open-ended questions on instructors' experiences, behaviors, and strategies for demonstrating enthusiasm and providing feedback (Appendix C), while allowing for follow-up questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Instructors received the questions one week before the interview, which was audio-recorded and transcribed.

### ***Self-Reflection***

As the researcher was also an instructor in the study, self-study research concepts were employed to examine her teaching practices (Samaras, 2011). To gain new insights, she collaborated with a critical friend, a colleague with over a decade of experience in supervising physical activity instructors. The conversation, audio-recorded via Zoom, facilitated reflection on



enthusiasm and feedback in her instruction. Appendix E provides the comprehensive self-reflection.

### ***Focus Groups***

Focus group interviews involved a convenient sample of students from each remote physical activity course. Employing a semi-structured approach, six voluntary focus groups, with two to four participants each, discussed their instructor's enthusiasm and feedback for up to 60 minutes. Verbal consent was obtained before audio-video recording. Five questions guided the conversation (Appendix D), and all recordings were transcribed.

### **Data Analysis**

In the iterative qualitative design, data was analyzed concurrently with collection, enabling the development of themes and modification of initial concepts. Observational data was documented in field notes, which guided interviews and focus groups. All recordings were transcribed, reviewed, and edited for accuracy before being uploaded to NVivo for analysis.

The Collaborative Qualitative Data Analysis (CQA) approach, based on thematic analysis, guided data analysis through its six-step process (Richards & Hemphill, 2018). The researcher first created a flexible timeline and then conducted open and axial coding on diverse data transcripts. Open coding identified patterns within the data, while axial coding organized codes to establish connections and categories. After developing a preliminary codebook, it was pilot tested with uncoded data, adjusted as needed, and used for coding all data. Due to time constraints, full consensus coding was not possible; the researcher, however, assessed discrepancies and made informed decisions for coding. The final step involved finalizing themes for the results section, with the final codebook provided in Appendix F.

Upon analyzing data from interviews, observations, self-reflection, and focus groups, a list of exhibited enthusiasm behaviors and feedback techniques was compiled. To determine if these findings constituted best practices, the researcher consulted a critical friend—an experienced colleague in teaching and supervising physical activity courses—who offered valuable insights and alternative perspectives. The final recommendations emerged from this insightful conversation.

## **Results**

This study had two aims, the first was to identify strategies for displaying enthusiasm and providing feedback in remote, synchronous fitness-based physical activity courses. Analysis yielded six themes for enthusiasm: nonverbal communication, energy, vocal delivery, learning environment, demeanor, and topic-related enthusiasm. Five themes emerged for feedback: encouragement, nonverbal cues, performance-related, direction, and outside-of-class feedback.

### **Enthusiasm**

#### ***Nonverbal Communication***

Three sub-themes were generated from this theme: facial expressions, hand gestures, and body language. The data collected consistently highlighted facial expressions as a means of demonstrating enthusiasm in the class. Smiling was the most commonly noted expression, with the researcher stating, “from the moment students log in, I am constantly smiling.” Raised eyebrows were also identified as a sign of enthusiasm, with FGP Fiona noting that the instructor uses her eyebrows to communicate, “one expression you do that, I can tell that is enthusiasm is you raise your eyebrows ... your eyebrows say a lot, you normally have raised or raised them somewhat.” Another student, FGP Josie, observed that her instructor used her eyes to convey enthusiasm, commenting, “using like your eyebrows and your eyes a lot, smiling with your eyes

and talking with your eyes.” The data also revealed that the use of facial expressions was consistent throughout the entire class. Overall, the data emphasized the importance of nonverbal communication in conveying enthusiasm with smiling, raised eyebrows, and expressive eyes.

Nonverbal communication through hand gestures was an effective way to express enthusiasm, as indicated by students in the focus group. They reported that their instructor frequently employed gestures such as thumbs up, clap, and high fives. FGP Grace highlighted the significance of these gestures, stating they helped to vocalize enthusiasm, despite not being verbal. FGP Mary similarly noted that her instructor used these hand gestures regularly, “after pretty much every single song.” This was further confirmed by the Zumba class observation, where the instructor employed similar hand gestures, including thumbs up, clapping, and high fives, between each song.

The instructor’s enthusiasm was conveyed through nonverbal communication, including body language. According to FGP Josie, her instructor’s use of body language was use “to indicate like we’re positive, and we’re moving, and that we’re having fun.” FGP Mary, mentioned her instructor’s posture on camera as an indicator of confidence and alertness, which brought enthusiasm to the whole class. The instructor’s head nodding was also noted several times during the class observations and focus group discussion. FGP Kayla felt her instructor was enthusiastic when listening to student opinions as she nodded and listened attentively.

### ***Instructor’s Energy***

Three sub-themes were generated from this theme: energy level, movement choice, and singing. The importance of displaying enthusiasm through the instructor’s energy level was evident across various sources, including focus groups, instructor interview, and self-reflection. Students recognized the impact of their instructor’s high energy levels in motivating and

energizing them, as evident by FGP Naomi's positive experience with the instructor's energetic demonstrations, Danielle's motivation to attend class due to the instructor's enthusiasm, and Logan's rejuvenation from fatigue through his instructor's level of energy, as he stated:

I have like a really positive experience with it just because there'd be some days where I'd be super tired and then her energy would kind of bring me alive, then, towards the end of class I'd be like energized for the rest of the day.

Another student, FGP Mary, also emphasized her instructor's consistency in maintaining the same energy level throughout each class, thereby ensuring a positive experience for all students. FGP Fiona similarly highlighted the importance of ending the class with the same every level as at the start, "[ended] how you started, with the same energy level."

The instructor's energy level also had an impact on the students, as observed through the shared experience of FGP and instructor interviews. FGP Fiona specifically noted that her instructor's energy level would increase when students were struggling with the workout and FGP Mary emphasized the importance of an energetic instructor to motivate students. Amanda, the yoga instructor, highlighted the need for positive and enthusiastic energy to keep students engaged, which is also supported by the researcher's own experience in using energy to create excitement in dance classes stating, "dancing can be uncomfortable for some students and a hard workout, so I try to bring a lot of energy ... to get them excited to want to dance."

According to students, the instructor's movement choice brings a lot of energy to the class. FGP Emma said her instructor is "very upbeat in her movements and she makes a very bold and big [moves] so everyone kind of can catch on." She also mentioned that the instructor's movements "bring a lot of energy" to the class. The researcher also observed that she makes her "dance moves big" and will also bring energy to the class by "[clapping] at the beginning of some songs." The instructor's movement choice also has to do with music, as Josie stated:

I think a lot of it has to do with the music choices and the cadence that like we're moving at, has a lot to do with the energy level ... she's using her whole body and not like half doing like a movement ... Everything's pretty bold, I guess, all movements, facial expressions it's all pretty bold and so it doesn't really ever get boring.

Lastly, singing was found as a prominent way to express as shown by the observational field notes, a focus group, and the researcher's self-reflection. According to the observed Zumba class, the instructor sang along to seven out of the 11 songs played during the class. Furthermore, the researcher acknowledged singing as a personal means of demonstrating enthusiasm, stating, "I do sing along to some of the lyrics of the songs from time to time." In the focus group, Fiona and Emma attested to the instructor's use of singing to foster excitement, noting that "when you sing along with the song" it contributes to the overall enthusiastic atmosphere.

### ***Vocal Delivery***

Two sub-themes were generated from this theme: tone and pitch. Vocal tone played an important role in conveying enthusiasm, as evident by all four data collections methods. Observations revealed that both instructors used a happy and excited tone. In addition, the instructor interview and self-reflection data showed that they used their tone of voice to exude enthusiasm to the students. Furthermore, several students in the focus group also mentioned that their instructor's tone of voice was a way to display enthusiasm during class. For example, FGP Logan perceived his instructor as enthusiastic because of her positive and warm tone.

FGP Mary and Hazel each had a unique description about their instructor's tone of voice.

FGP Mary stated:

You're just very enthusiastic with your tone of voice that it makes it very easy to get on board with the whole thing, because when I first got into this class, I was super apprehensive towards it, I'm like this is going to be dumb, but you make it very, well, just by the way you talk about it and talk to us, you make people excited to do it, and look forward to it.

Hazel highlighted that her instructor managed to balance enthusiasm and calmness effectively during the yoga class, stating:

I think she did a really good job of it, especially with it being yoga and trying to keep that like calm setting but still finding ways to show enthusiasm in it. Because you don't want to let, you don't want to kind of get your participants out of that mindset. And she did a really good job of trying to keep us calm, but also kind of keeping us excited about what she was teaching us the moves.

The use of vocal pitch, the highness or lowness of someone's voice, to convey enthusiasm was also identified through various data collection methods. The researcher emphasized the importance of vocal fluctuations to express excitement, stating, "I use a lot of vocal fluctuations, varying my pitch to go up and down ... to show enthusiasm." Students in the focus group similarly stated how their instructor's pitch would change when enthusiastic, with FGP Naomi saying, "her voice would get a little high like she'd get all excited. When she gets excited, she would talk a little louder." This was similarly documented in the observational field notes, with the instructor's pitch starting high and gradually lowering as instruction progressed, as noted in the quote, "each time the instructor would start talking, her vocal pitch would be higher, and she would talk louder, as instruction continued, her pitch would lower so would her volume." Each of these cases were in the yoga class, showing the instructor using higher pitch and volume to show enthusiasm but would gradually bring both down to maintain a calm class environment.

### ***Learning Environment***

Five sub-themes were generated from this theme: welcoming, supportive, clear explanations, fun, and tone of class. Expressing enthusiasm in a welcoming manner was a common finding, with the researcher highlighting the importance of logging into Zoom early to greet students with a smile and a wave. FGP Josie corroborated this notion by stating her

instructor typically welcomes the class by exuding high energy and a cheerful demeanor in an effort to engage the students. FGP Naomi similarly commented that her instructor “makes any class she teaches very welcoming.”

Support is another instructional aspect that was found to show enthusiasm. The focus group and observations showed that instructors who tailor their classes to their students’ needs and preferences demonstrate their support. As FGP Candance attested, her instructor asked the students what they wanted and what their bodies needed for that day, as well as allowing them to listen to their bodies. According to FGP Josie, her instructor regularly checks in with the students “asks how we’re doing, if we are getting bored of songs, if we want to switch out songs.” Moreover, FGP Grace described how her instructor displayed support from the beginning of class, explaining, “she uses a lot of enthusiasm with like everything that she does from the start of class, she makes sure to ask us all how we’re doing and just how we are, and I think that really benefits how I take the class.” FGP Brittany shared that her instructor’s enthusiasm extended beyond the dancing aspect of the class, stating:

I would say that my instructor is not only as enthusiastic, like during the Zumba and dancing, but also like, like everyone said before it even starts, she checks in with us, and in between like halfway she will check in, and also at the end, but she always is wanting to check in and ask us how we’re doing.

Furthermore, students valued their instructor’s approachability and supportiveness, as expressed by FGP Danielle who mentioned that her instructor offered, “if there’s anything you need help with if there’s anything you want to discuss further, like just let me know. I’m here to help you.” FGP Josie also expressed that the students feel reassured by the instructor’s constant availability and willingness to help, stating, “I guess just we just know that our instructor is always there if we ever need anything and that’s helpful.”

Enthusiasm can also be displayed through clear explanations, as highlighted through the focus group. FGP Danielle praises her instructor for being vocal and talking them through things stating, “she talked us through things, and she always like explained things.”

FGP Danielle was initially nervous about doing yoga due to mobility issues, but her instructor’s enthusiasm and willingness to explain things made her want to come to class, saying, “she was always willing to explain or double explain or triple explain.” Amanda supported FGO Danielle’s claims by stating, “with my yoga classes, I think I have to be extra actually enthusiastic about how amazing yoga is and explain it beforehand ... probably an over emphasized enthusiasm, yeah, about what we’re doing and what it is.”

Another sub-theme generated during analysis was the importance of making physical activity fun to show enthusiasm. During the Zumba class observation, the researcher asked the class twice if they were having fun, with the researcher noting their own efforts to “make the class fun by not taking myself too seriously and laughing when I mess up,” and how “it is not about doing the dances perfectly; it is about moving our bodies and having fun.” Both yoga and Zumba FGP emphasized how their instructors “made it so much fun.” FGP Josie explained how her instructor exhibited enthusiasm by “living by dancing is fun, and movement is fun, and just kind of carrying that all throughout class.” FGP Emma further communicated why fun is an integral component of instructor enthusiasm, commenting:

I think it’s important too, that with the enthusiasm, that you make it feel like it’s for fun rather than actually a workout. Because that’s my favorite type of workout, is when I don’t realize that I’m actually working out because cardio sucks, if you think about it. So, I think the enthusiasm definitely helps with the fact that you are actually getting physical activity and making it a fun way to do it.

The final sub-theme generated for learning environment was tone of class. It appears that the instructor’s initial and concluding approaches to the class establish the overall tone. FGP



Hazel noted that her instructor “tried really hard” to “start on a positive note, end on a positive note.” Similarly, FGP Josie reported that her instructor “usually starts out by being really peppy and smiling, like right at the beginning of class trying to get us involved before our session and kind of give us like a rundown of what we’re doing.” Additionally, Amanda emphasized the importance of setting the tone by demonstrating enthusiasm not only during the class but also before and after it. As she put it, “I think, the before and after [class], as well, has been really essential for me in setting the tone.”

### ***Instructor’s Demeanor***

Two sub-themes were generated from this theme: attitude and humor. The instructors demonstrated enthusiasm through their attitude, which was characterized as positive and upbeat. Students described their instructors as having personalities that exude enthusiasm, with one student, FGP Naomi, stating, “honestly, her personality shows enthusiasm,” describing her instructor’s attitude as someone you want to be around. FGP Ivy also observed that her instructor was “always happy” when dancing, while FGP Loga noted that his instructor was “always positive” and in a good mood. These comments were further supported by the researcher, who emphasized the importance of maintaining a positive and upbeat attitude from the moment students log in to class.

Humor is a common way for instructors to display their enthusiasm, as evident by the data collected. Students noted how their instructors would joke around during class, using humor to make connections with them. For instance, a couple FGPs mentioned how their instructor would use dance moves and humorous discussion questions to engage them during class. Similarly, the researcher shared how she used humor in questions and jokes before and after class, stating:

I also use humor as a way to display enthusiasm. I like to joke around with students before and after class. I also use humor in the questions I ask students during our daily social engagement. At the start of each class, I like to give students a question to answer in our Zoom chat as a way to get to know each other better. For example, I asked students which of the seven dwarfs they are most like from Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs movie. After everyone answers in the chat, some will usually share more information, and we all have a good laugh.

The other instructor, Amanda, also emphasized how she uses humor in engaging students and creating a lighthearted atmosphere in class, stating it was an essential piece that helped to connect with students. Furthermore, both instructors expressed their willingness to laugh at themselves, which also helped create a more relaxed learning environment. The researcher further noted that in remote settings, there was a need to be more enthusiastic and use more humor to maintain student engagement.

### ***Instructor's Topic-Related Enthusiasm***

Two sub-themes were identified from this theme: personal experience and passion. An instructor's personal experience can bring a unique and valuable perspective to a class, demonstrating enthusiasm for the subject matter. As FGP Danielle noted, her instructor's willingness to share her personal experiences and connections with the material was a sign of her enthusiasm for the topic, stating:

She brought her personal experiences in. Which kind of like, to me, if you like, bring personal stuff and you like are showing enthusiasm in the subject because you're like, "hey I have this great connection with this, which is why I appreciate it." I just thought she was really, really, really good at bringing her personal thoughts in.

This approach helped to make the subject matter more relatable and engaging for students as they could see how the material connected to the instructor's personal life and interests.

Enthusiasm was evident in both instructors who demonstrated their passion for the activity they teach. The researcher stated that her "excitement and passion for dancing shines throughout the entire class." Likewise, Amanda emphasized how her "passion for yoga seeps

through the camera,” and that it is essential for her to express her enthusiasm for yoga for students to fall in love with it. Amanda further stated that her students have noticed her passion for yoga in student evaluations she received, “you could tell she really likes what she teaches, she really loves yoga, she’s very passionate when she speaks.” FGP Danielle also remarked that Amanda’s passion for teaching yoga was apparent when she heard her speak about chakras, “she sounded enthusiastic ... it was just it was really cool hearing her talk about it because she sounded passionate.” FGP Ivy noted, “I think you can kind of tell when people enjoy things that they do, and yeah, you seem to have a passion for it.” FGP Emma echoed the sentiment and stated, “you can just kind of see it in all the enthusiasm that you do give and also, I feel like it’s, not just for us you’re doing it for yourself as well. I feel like you have to have the passion behind it, to be able to show it, as well as you do, and for others to want to do it, too.”

## **Feedback**

### ***Encouraging Feedback***

Two sub-themes were generated from this theme: motivation and praise. The data indicated that instructors provide motivational feedback to students during class through various forms, such as verbal and non-verbal cues. FGPs reported receiving words of encouragement from their instructors, like “keep going, we’re almost done” and “great, only four more inhales, almost there, you’ve got this.” Non-verbal cues like thumbs up were also mentioned as effective motivational feedback, along with instructors getting close to the camera to “pump up” students.

Amanda explained that she provides positive affirmations and encouragement:

a lot of just positive affirmation words, even if I can’t see them. You know, I’m like “good,” “great,” and that’s exactly it. Like, if I know it’s something that is challenging, I’m like, “we’re almost done,” “we’re doing good,” “you’re doing good.”

The observational field notes showed that the Zumba instructor gave motivational feedback between dance songs by giving “air high-fives, mouthing ‘good job’ and ‘you’ve got this,’ and giving thumbs up.”

Instructors also provided encouraging feedback to students by praising their efforts and progress during class. FGP reported that instructors would often tell them “Good job” or “I’m proud of you” at the end of the class or during specific moments when they excelled. One FGP, Hazel, noted her instructor would come close up to the camera and quietly tell them they were doing a good job to avoid distracting the rest of the class. Personal compliments were also mentioned, with Logan stating, “if I were to do that pose correctly or follow her instructions, she would like compliment me personally.” Both instructors were observed providing feedback through positive reinforcement, such as saying “beautiful,” “yes,” or nodding their head to emphasize students were doing great.

### ***Nonverbal Cues***

Four sub-themes were identified from this theme: directional, movement preview, movement changes, and repetitions. The data collected showed that instructors use nonverbal cues to provide feedback on direction during class. Students like FGP Emma and FGP Fiona both noted how their instructor points in the direction of the next movement or step, which helps students understand the direction and movements required for the next step. FGP Grace added that her instructors of hand gestures had a significant impact on understanding directions without verbal communication. The Zumba instructor also relied heavily on nonverbal cues, as noted in the field notes, to provide feedback on direction using various nonverbal cues, including looking and pointing in different direction, waving and spinning her fingers in circles to indicate turns, and mouthing the direction of the next move to help students stay on track.

Students have reported finding nonverbal cues from their instructor to be useful in anticipating the next movement during class, according to comments from two participants in the study. FGP Mary explained that they give her “a sneak peek if we’re just learning the song or a reminder of what’s to come,” and FGP Josie noting that “we always know what the next movement is going to be, it’s not a surprise ... we just anticipate what’s going to happen from your cues.” The Zumba instructor confirmed that these cues are intentional and use “to let the students know what dance move is next by previewing the dance move or pointing at a specific body part two counts before we change to that move.” The observational field notes also show instances where the instructor previewed the next move, such as “previews next move by doing a bicep curl with right arm and a hamstring curl with her right leg before performing it eight times.”

The importance of nonverbal cues to provide feedback was highlighted in the findings which showed one instructor uses a variety of cues to signal changes in movement during the Zumba class. These cues include facial expressions, hand gestures, and changes in posture. According to FGP Ivy, the instructor is particularly good at using cues when introducing a new dance, “when you introduce a new dance for the first time, you’re good about like doing the cues.” Another student noted how that the instructor’s use of “hand gestures and facial expressions” were helpful cues for providing feedback. This was confirmed by the observational notes, which describes how the instructor would use nonverbal cues to indicate an upcoming change the movement, the instructor “mouths “back”, points down and back, looks down and back, furrows eyebrows, before crossing feet to the back.” The notes also recorded an instance where the instructor would furrow her eyebrows and stop smiling while hitting the top of her head, before starting the dance from the top again.

Lastly, the data also revealed the use of nonverbal cues to indicate the number of repetitions to complete during the activity. As stated by the Zumba instructor, “I also let students know how many repetitions to do by holding up a specific number and/or counting down fingers.” Examples from the observational notes indicate that these cues can take on various forms, such as holding up fingers, mouthing the number, and using specific gestures. For instance, the instructor would hold up three fingers, mouth “three,” then circle her hips three times while counting down each hip rotation on her fingers. In another example, the instructor mouthed “we’ve got two” while holding up two fingers on her left hand before doing two squats. Overall, these findings demonstrate that nonverbal cues are an effective way for instructors to provide feedback during activity.

### ***Performance-Related Feedback***

Four sub-themes were generated from this theme: prescriptive, demonstration, corrective, and comparative. Prescriptive feedback improved performance in activity classes by providing specific guidance on alignment, form, modifications, and physical sensations. Instructors like Amanda gave alignment feedback such as “bring [your feet] about hip widths distance,” “keeping our spine long,” “wrists under your shoulders, knees under your hips,” and “check alignment in your feet and adjust if you need.” Feedback on form was also provided by reminding students if their legs, arms, or back weren’t straight, and giving individualized feedback like “try and shift your hands a little bit and maybe that will help you reach out a little further.” Modifications were demonstrated for those with injuries or physical limitations, as described by the Zumba instructor, and Amanda gave examples like “avoid this pose” for students with knee issues before providing another pose option. Two focus group participants shared similar experiences. FGP Hazel said, “she tries to give the modifications beforehand, so

we can self-adjust.” Likewise, FGP Fiona declared, “you always try to find a way to give us feedback if we can’t do something,” and gave an example of how her instructor suggested alternative movements to those who couldn’t squat. Physical sensations were also described, with Amanda guiding her students to “feel this lengthening in the side bodies,” “feel your shoulder blades squeeze together,” and “feel that nice lift happening out of your pelvis.” The feedback was found to be effective, with Amanda noting, “I can see the response when I clarify something.”

FGP from each of the three classes found demonstrating exercises to be an effective way of providing performance-related feedback. Amanda, the yoga instructor, confirmed this by saying, “In the beginning of yoga, since we’re online, I’ll be like, ‘just come to your knees really quick, look at me first, I’ll explain it really quick.’” This was also observed in each of the classes when Amanda stated:

Pressing down through the feet (said while pointing fingers down towards her feet), my back leg is nice and active here. Notice if were here (moves foot in closer to the body), we really want to give ourselves a nice lunge position, so walk that front foot forward and bend into your knee (said while she walks her front foot forward and bend knee into lunge).

The Zumba instructor also used demonstration to provide feedback by pointing at her chest, mouthing “keep your chest lifted” while visibly lifting her own chest.

The analysis further revealed that the instructors provided performance-related feedback using corrective cues in class. FGP reported that their instructor delivered corrective feedback in a positive manner. FGP Hazel mentioned that her instructor used the “compliment sandwich” method, where she would start with a compliment, then provide corrective feedback, and end with another compliment. Similarly, FGP Danielle observed that her instructor always made corrective feedback positive, saying, “not exactly, almost there, and here I’ll show you what I’m

doing.” Logan also noted that his instructor would inform them if there was something that needed correcting. The instructors themselves confirmed this approach, with Amanda explaining that if she saw students struggling with a pose or movement, she would “tell them to come down and explain a bit further with my voice and so they have their eyes looking at me as well.” While the Zumba instructor also noted that she would observe each dance move and provide corrective feedback.

Lastly, instructors provided performance-related feedback using comparative cues and descriptions to, as indicated by the comments from FGP and the instructors themselves. FGPs Mary and Grace mentioned that their instructor would compare dance moves they were learning to previous moves they learned or had done. The Zumba instructor supported these statements in her self-reflection by saying that she starts with the most basic form of the dance move and compares it to a move the students have previously done or know. Similarly, Amanda used comparative feedback during her yoga class, such as instructing students to “push the hands forward like you’re pushing water” or when she compared a twisting pose to wringing out water in a towel.

### ***Direction of Feedback***

Two sub-themes were generated from this theme: group and individual feedback. Instructor frequently provided feedback to the class as a whole. FGP Hazel and Danielle noted that their instructor often gave feedback to the whole class, with Danielle recalling statements like “everyone needs to move a little but further up their mat.” The yoga instructor, Amanda, also primarily provided feedback to the entire class, but would address individual questions for the benefit of everyone. She also encouraged in-class conversations and group problem-solving, recognizing the value of students seeing the difference in their classmates’ bodies and the impact



of thoughts, emotions, and energy on the body. During the Zumba class observation, the instructor only provided feedback to the entire class and made broader statements. FGP Emma also noted her instructor's feedback was directed at the class as a whole, to avoid singling out specific students.

In addition to providing feedback to the class as a whole, instructors also gave individualized feedback to students. The Zumba instructor mentioned most personalized feedback is provided at the start of the semester when breaking down each dance style. Amanda mentioned if she has the opportunity to see someone's body during class, she can give them individual feedback. Similarly, FGP Danielle shared that her instructor gave the option for students to turn off their camera if they did not want specific feedback. Amanda also added that most personal feedback is given during reflections, a sentiment also shared by two FGP Logan and Candance. During class, Amanda was also observed giving specific feedback once to a student, suggesting a modification to a pose to avoid potential harm.

### ***Outside of Class Feedback***

Two sub-themes were identified from this theme: reflections and after class. The data collected indicates that feedback is also provided to students outside of class through weekly reflections. Four FGP mentioned how much personal feedback they received through their reflections. FGP Logan expressed how effective his instructor's feedback was through the weekly reflections, where she would analyze how the students felt and performed, then give feedback on how to improve. He also appreciated how his instructor would help him with difficult parts of his practice:

anytime something was difficult for me, whether it was like a certain pose or if it was like trying to find my breathing during the exercises, she would tell me how I could improve it with it. So, that's what I really liked about it.

As an instructor, Amanda emphasized the importance of reflections in giving feedback to her students, stating she spends a lot of time answering each reflection and considers it her primary source of personal feedback. Amanda has received appreciation from students for being thorough with her feedback. In this way, instructors provide a personalized and constructive critique of the students' progress outside of class.

Lastly, instructors frequently provided feedback to students before and after class. Students reported that their instructors encourage them to ask questions and seek help outside of class. FGP Kayla mentioned that her instructor always offered to answer questions via email, while FGP Brittany reported that her instructor held a designated time after class to address any questions or concerns. These findings were further supported by the instructors. For example, the Zumba instructor explicitly told her students that she was available before and after class to go through dance moves, while Amanda noted that her students often stayed after class to ask questions. Amanda also received positive feedback from students who were thankful for the extra time and attention given to them after class.

In addition to exploring themes related to instructor enthusiasm and feedback, the second aim of this study was to develop recommendations for physical activity instructors teaching fitness-based remote, synchronous courses. After careful consideration and discussion with a critical friend, two themes were ultimately excluded from the final list of recommendations: instructor enthusiasm related to the learning environment, and feedback direction for instructors.

Although the sub-themes of the learning environment—clear explanations, fun, supportive, tone of class, and welcoming—as all crucial factors for instructors to consider, they were deemed too closely related to the Learning Environment core topic in the *Appropriate Instructional Practice Guidelines* provided by SHAPE America (2022). The decision was made

to remove this theme from the final recommendations, as these aspects are covered more comprehensively under the other section, and overlap between the two sections, instructional strategies and learning environment, was to be avoided.

The researcher and critical friend also concluded that the direction of feedback should be left up to the discretion of the instructor. This is because the type of feedback that is appropriate for one class may not be suitable for another, and the instructor should consider the unique needs and abilities of their students when determining the direction of feedback. For example, in a class with beginner students, the instructor may need to provide more explicit instructions and feedback, while in an advanced class, the focus may be on more nuanced adjustments and feedback. Additionally, the delivery of feedback can vary depending on the instructor's teaching style and learning preferences of the students. It is important for the instructor to be flexible and adaptable in their approach to feedback and take into consideration the diverse needs and abilities of their students to ensure a successful learning experience for all.

The recommendations provided to the physical activity instructors for enthusiasm and feedback in fitness-based remote, synchronous courses are as follows: to display enthusiasm through nonverbal communication, maintain high energy, deliver course content in a clear and engaging vocal tone and pitch, exhibit a positive demeanor in attitude and use of humor, and display enthusiasm for the topic being taught; for feedback, provide encouraging feedback, use nonverbal cues to reinforce feedback, provide performance-related feedback, and offer feedback outside of class to support students' progress.

## **Discussion**

The aim of this study was to identify and provide recommendations on the instructional strategies used to display enthusiasm and provide feedback in remote PA courses. The findings

produced a list of recommended strategies on enthusiasm and feedback that was supported by some previous research, but some data generated provided new insight into strategies instructors need to consider when delivering a PA course in a remote setting.

### **Enthusiasm**

This study indicates that nonverbal cues significantly convey enthusiasm in teaching physical activity courses. Key expressions include smiling, expressive eyes, hand gestures like thumbs up and high fives, and proper body posture. Instructor energy level and movement choice, particularly energetic and upbeat motions, effectively enhance student engagement. Instructors also use humor, personal experiences, and a genuine passion for the subject to make learning more relatable and engaging.

The results of this study align with current research on instructor enthusiasm. Enthusiasm can be expressed through verbal and nonverbal communication, including tone of voice, hand gestures, facial expressions, body language, and energy level (Bettencourt et al., 1983; Collins, 1978; Murray, 1983, 2007; Patrick et al., 2000). Facial expressions such as smiling and raised eyebrows, and vocal delivery, such as changes in tone and pitch, have been identified as effective ways to express enthusiasm (Collins, 1978). Moreover, prior research has demonstrated that instructors can convey enthusiasm for the subject matter they are teaching (Kunter et al., 2008; Kunter et al., 2011).

On the other hand, the study differs from current research in that it focused solely on physical activity courses. Although instructor enthusiasm has been the subject of previous research, the majority of studies have been conducted in academic classroom settings (Collins, 1976), using preservice teachers as participants (Carlisle & Phillips, 1984), and have focused only on in-person instruction (Collins, 1976). There has been a lack of research on instructor

enthusiasm in a remote learning environment. While the use of singing was noted as a way of expressing enthusiasm, it has not been widely studied in the context of physical activity courses. The results suggest that singing can serve as a personal way for instructors to express their enthusiasm, as this behavior was observed by the students. In order to establish guidelines for instructor enthusiasm in remote physical activity courses, it is necessary to conduct future research on a larger scale. Chapter III provides a more comprehensive discussion on this topic.

### **Feedback**

This study indicates that nonverbal cues significantly convey enthusiasm in teaching physical activity courses. Key expressions include smiling, expressive eyes, hand gestures like thumbs up and high fives, and proper body posture. Instructor energy level and movement choice, particularly energetic and upbeat motions, effectively enhance student engagement. Instructors also use humor, personal experiences, and a genuine passion for the subject to make learning more relatable and engaging.

The findings of this study are consistent with current research on instructor feedback when performing physical activity. Offering feedback to students about their performance is one of the most frequent tasks performed by teachers during instruction (Lee et al., 1993). Feedback is regarded as a significant instructional approach for teaching and learning as it provides evaluative information by comparing desired movements with those actually performed (Chen, 2001). Prescriptive feedback has been shown to highlight ways students can improve their performance on the next attempt (Chen, 2001; Sinclair, 1985). For fitness-based physical activity courses, it was mentioned that general and corrective feedback was most often used by instructors (Byra et al., 2014). Additionally, motivational or affective feedback is often used

throughout the literature and is commonly positive (Chen, 2001; Lee et al., 1993; Spittle et al., 2020).

Contrary to existing research, this study emphasizes the use of nonverbal cues in instructor feedback for physical activity courses, an area underrepresented in the literature. It illustrates how instructors employ nonverbal cues to guide direction, preview movements, signal changes, and indicate repetitions. The study also underscores the importance of continuous feedback, both in and out of class, which is not commonly documented in related literature. These findings present fresh insights into diverse ways of supporting students. However, future large-scale research is needed to establish guidelines for feedback in remote physical activity courses. Further discussion is provided in Chapter III.

### **Limitations**

This study, limited by its focus on only two physical activity courses, yoga and Zumba, may not fully represent the wide array of fitness activities in educational settings. The qualitative nature of the research and use of a convenient sample for focus groups could restrict the generalizability and diversity of findings. As a result, the study's findings should be interpreted carefully and not extended to other settings without further research. Acknowledging these limitations is crucial to inform and strengthen future research on remote physical activity instruction.

## CHAPTER II: DISSEMINATION

The research findings will be shared in *The Internet & Higher Education*, a reputable academic journal focused on internet-based teaching and learning in higher education. This quarterly peer-reviewed publication targets physical activity instructors conducting courses in remote learning environments. The journal encourages innovative and unique manuscripts from various fields and offers open access, ensuring global accessibility to published research without cost, amplifying its impact and reach.

### **Introduction**

The prevalence of digital learning in US higher education has been rising since 2004 (Palvia et al., 2018), a trend accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic (D'Amato, 2020). Courses can be delivered synchronously (remote learning) or asynchronously (online learning) (UNO, 2020). While most research focuses on content-based classes, Kinesiology has also started adopting digital learning (Graber & Chodzko-Zajko, 2014), presenting unique challenges due to its movement-based learning requirement.

Instructor enthusiasm has been linked to enhanced student motivation, energy, and achievement (Keller et al., 2014; Kunter et al., 2013; Murry, 2007; Patrick et al., 2000; Parson, 2001; Rosenshire, 1970). Carlisle and Phillips (1984) found more enthusiastic preservice physical education teachers spent more instructional time. However, it is unclear if such enthusiasm behaviors persist across physical activity instruction settings, be it in-person or digital, or if different methods are adopted.

Feedback is a widely used instructional strategy considered vital for skill development, despite inconsistent links with student achievement (Lee et al., 1993). It provides information about a student's movement to affirm or improve performance, playing a key role in learning

(Chen, 2001; Lee et al., 1993; Nunes et al., 2020; Parson, 2001; Silverman et al., 1992). As Jeong and So (2020) noted, “Immediate feedback is needed to motivate students to learn and strengthen their active class attitude” (p. 74). More effective teachers tend to provide more feedback (DeKnop, 1986; Phillips & Carlisle, 1983).

SHAPE America (2022) updated their guidelines for higher education physical activity programs to include hybrid and online learning. However, they do not clearly differentiate between these formats or specify whether online learning includes both asynchronous and synchronous methods. They also do not detail teaching behaviors or characteristics for effective enthusiasm conveyance and feedback. This lack of specificity complicates Kinesiology faculty’s readiness for digital learning, as discipline-specific instruction research lags (Kim & Gurvitch, 2020). With the rise of remote learning, there is a need for clear recommendations on how instructors can demonstrate enthusiasm and provide feedback to improve teaching effectiveness in such environments.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify the instructional strategies and develop recommendations for a Midwest university on instructor enthusiasm and feedback during fitness-based physical activity in a remote learning environment. Therefore, this study aims are twofold: to identify the strategies instructors use to demonstrate enthusiasm and provide feedback in fitness-based remote, synchronous physical activity courses, and to develop recommendations on enthusiasm and feedback for physical activity instructors to use in fitness-based remote, synchronous courses.



## **Methods**

### **Participants**

This study involved part-time and full-time instructors teaching remote physical activity courses, along with 13 students from these courses. Students were recruited during class for a focus group, incentivized by a \$10 digital gift card. The instructor was recruited via email, and students on Zoom during their physical activity class, both in 2021. Detailed study information was provided at recruitment, including inclusion criteria, purpose, data collection, confidentiality, and time commitment. The study was approved by the University of North Carolina Greensboro's IRB.

### **Procedures**

Yin (2018) describes case study research as an in-depth investigation of real-world context. For case studies, this involves collecting an array of evidence from several sources. Four sources of evidence used in this study include observations, interviews, reflection, and focus groups.

Instructors' classes were recorded for observation after informed consent, with field notes detailing enthusiasm and feedback behaviors, guided by the Schatzman and Strauss (1973) model. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with instructors, involving prepared open-ended questions on their experiences and strategies for demonstrating enthusiasm and providing feedback, with room for follow-up inquiries.

Simultaneously, the researcher, an instructor herself, engaged in self-study to examine her teaching practices, collaborating with a critical friend for more profound insights. Lastly, focus group interviews were conducted with a convenience sample of students from each course. They discussed their instructor's enthusiasm and feedback strategies, guided by five questions.

All interviews, self-reflection discussions, and focus groups were recorded and transcribed for further analysis.

## **Analysis**

The Collaborative Qualitative Data Analysis (CQA) approach guided the data analysis using thematic analysis, allowing for inductive and deductive approaches (Richards & Hemphill, 2018). The process started with a flexible timeline and moved into open and axial coding of different data transcripts, with the researcher journaling emergent themes. Once comfortable, the researcher developed a codebook containing themes, subthemes, definitions, and direct quotes. A team member (KB) provided feedback on the initial codebook. The codebook was then tested with uncoded data, with the researcher and another team member (DW) coding the same transcripts and noting any issues. Necessary adjustments were made to the codebook. Consensus coding was used for final coding, with data coded by the researcher and other team members (KB-1, DW-2, AW-2). After each coding, discrepancies were discussed until consensus was reached. The final step was to finalize themes for the results section.

## **Results**

This study had two aims, the first was to identify the strategies instructors use to demonstrate enthusiasm and provide feedback in fitness-based remote, synchronous physical activity courses. During analysis, a total of six themes were generated for enthusiasm: nonverbal communication, instructor's energy, vocal delivery, learning environment, instructor's demeanor, and instructor's topic-related enthusiasm. A total of five themes were generated for feedback during analysis: encouraging feedback, nonverbal cues, performance-related feedback, direction of feedback, and outside of class feedback.

## **Enthusiasm**

### ***Nonverbal Communication***

Three sub-themes were generated from this theme: facial expressions, hand gestures, and body language. Students noted the instructor's constant smiling and use of raised eyebrows and expressive eyes as crucial in communicating enthusiasm through facial expressions. Hand gestures such as thumbs up, clapping, and high fives were reported as effective in expressing enthusiasm. The instructor's use of body language, including posture and head nodding, was also noted as conveying confidence, alternatives, and enthusiasm to the students.

### ***Instructor's Energy***

Three sub-themes were generated from this theme: energy level, movement choice, and signing. Both students and instructors acknowledged the instructor's high, consistent energy levels as a motivational factor in class. The instructor's movement choice, particularly bold and big moves, further added to class energy. Moreover, singing along to songs was identified as a notable way for instructors to express their enthusiasm.

### ***Vocal Delivery***

Two sub-themes were generated from this theme: tone and pitch. Instructors used a happy and excited tone, engaging students with their positive and warm demeanor. Fluctuations in vocal pitch were utilized to express excitement, observed by students. The yoga instructor skillfully balanced enthusiasm and calmness, employing higher pitch and volume to demonstrate enthusiasm while gradually lowering them to maintain a serene environment.

### ***Learning Environment***

Five sub-themes were generated from this theme: welcoming, supportive, clear explanations, fun, and tone of class. Both the researcher and focus group participants emphasized

the importance of creating a welcoming environment, with instructors greeting students warmly and maintaining high energy. Regular check-ins and tailored support highlighted instructor enthusiasm. Clear explanations, often overemphasized, were also seen as an essential aspect of enthusiastic instruction. Instructors who prioritized fun and enjoyment were especially appreciated by students. The tone of the class, established by the instructor's approach at the start and end of the class, significantly influenced the perception of enthusiasm, underscoring the need for positivity not just during, but also before and after the class.

### ***Instructor's Demeanor***

Two sub-themes were identified from this theme: attitude and humor. Instructors maintained an upbeat attitude throughout the class, a trait students found compelling. They also utilized humor through dance moves, engaging discussions, and jokes to create a light-hearted atmosphere and connect with students. This ability to self-deprecate was especially appreciated. In remote settings, the researcher also highlighted the need for increased enthusiasm and humor to keep students engaged.

### ***Instructor's Topic-Related Enthusiasm***

Two sub-themes were identified from this theme: personal experience and passion. An instructor's personal experiences can foster enthusiasm and relatability, aiding student engagement by showcasing the material's relevance. Moreover, instructors' evident passion for their subject matter, as seen in the researcher's love for dance and Amanda's for yoga, can elevate class engagement and enjoyment. Such visible passion inspires students and enhances their interest in the material. An instructor's passion and are more likely to be inspired to learn and enjoy the material.

## **Feedback**

### ***Encouraging Feedback***

Two sub-themes were generated from this theme: motivation and praise. Instructors provided motivational feedback to students in various forms during class, including verbal and nonverbal cues. Verbal cues like positive affirmations and encouraging phrases such as “keep going” and “you’re going great” were used by instructors, while nonverbal cues such as thumbs up and air high fives were also used. Instructors also gave personal compliments and praised students’ efforts and progress during the class. Positive reinforcements, such as saying “beautiful” and nodding their head, were also used by instructors to emphasize students were doing great.

### ***Nonverbal Cues***

Four sub-themes were generated from this theme: directional, movement preview, movement changes, and repetitions. Instructors use nonverbal cues like pointing, hand gestures, head movements, and mouthing directions for guiding students. These cues, as observed by three focus group participants (FGP), assist in understanding movements and maintaining course. Nonverbal cues also help students anticipate the next movement, as confirmed by the Zumba instructor and two FGPs. Instructors signal movement changes through facial expressions, hand gestures, and posture shifts. In addition, they use nonverbal cues to indicate the number of repetitions during an activity, with specific gestures denoting the count to perform or left to complete.

### ***Performance-Related Feedback***

Four sub-themes were generated from this theme: prescriptive, demonstration, corrective, and comparative. Prescriptive feedback, offering specific guidance on form, alignment, and

modifications, enhances performance. Instructors also demonstrated modifications, providing individualized feedback, particularly for those with physical constraints. Demonstrating exercises, as mentioned by students and confirmed by instructors, served as an effective feedback mechanism. Corrective cues were used for performance-related feedback, often positively, through strategies like the “compliment sandwich” or guidance demonstrations. Finally, comparative cues helped provide feedback, as instructors made comparisons to previous dance moves or yoga pose techniques to clarify instructions.

### ***Direction of Feedback***

Two sub-themes were generated from this theme: group feedback, where the instructor provided feedback to the entire class, and individual feedback, where personalized feedback was given to individual students. Instructors frequently gave feedback to the class as a whole, using broader statements to avoid singling out specific students. However, individualized feedback was provided when observing a student’s body during class or giving suggestions to avoid potential harm.

### ***Feedback Outside of Class***

Two sub-themes were identified from this theme: reflections and before and after class feedback. Amanda offered personalized feedback outside class via weekly reflections, valued by students for its constructive critique. She deemed reflections as her main personal feedback method and invested significant time responding to each. Additionally, instructors often provided feedback before and after class, encouraging queries and assistance. Both the Zumba and yoga instructors made themselves available outside class hours for additional help, with students expressing appreciation for this extra attention and support.

The second aim of this study was to develop recommendations for instructors teaching remote fitness-based courses at a Midwest university. After thorough discussions, two themes—enthusiasm related to the learning environment and instructor’s feedback direction—were excluded from the final recommendations. The sub-themes of clear explanations, fun, support, class tone, and welcoming environment, though important, were omitted to avoid overlap with SHAPE America’s (2022) Instructional Practice Guidelines on learning environments.

The research team concluded that feedback direction should remain at the instructor’s discretion, due to varying class needs and teaching styles. An effective approach considers the diverse needs and abilities of students, and the delivery of feedback can vary accordingly. This flexibility ensures a successful learning experience, as the type of feedback suitable for one class might not be for another. Therefore, the instructor’s adaptability in feedback approach is essential.

## **Discussion**

### **Enthusiasm**

This study reinforces the importance of nonverbal cues in conveying enthusiasm in physical activity instruction. Key expressions include facial gestures, body posture, energetic movements, and humor, which align with prior studies on instructor enthusiasm (Bettencourt et al., 1983; Collins, 1978; Murray, 1983, 2007; Patrick et al., 2000). The use of personal experiences and passion for the subject also enhances the learning experience, similar to findings by Kunter et al. (2008, 2011).

The research is distinctive in its focus on physical activity courses, where most prior work has centered on academic classrooms and in-person instruction (Carlisle & Phillips, 1984; Collins, 1976). It uncovers a gap in understanding enthusiasm in remote learning environments

and highlights singing as a unique and unexplored enthusiasm expression in physical activity courses. For developing guidelines for enthusiasm in remote physical activity instruction, further large-scale research is recommended. A more in-depth discussion is available in Chapter III.

### **Feedback**

This study underlines the vital role of nonverbal cues in conveying enthusiasm and feedback in physical activity instruction. Key cues include facial expressions, body posture, energetic movements, and humor, which aligns with previous research on enthusiasm (Bettencourt et al., 1983; Collins, 1978; Murray, 1983, 2007; Patrick et al., 2000). Instructors also utilize personal experiences and passion for the subject to engage students, consistent with studies on feedback mechanisms (Chen, 2001; Lee et al., 1993).

Diverging from prevailing research, this study emphasizes the use of nonverbal cues in feedback, a less explored area in literature, and introduces the concept of feedback beyond class hours. Instructors utilize these cues for direction, movement previews, changes, and repetitions. The study advocates for more extensive research to develop guidelines for feedback in remote physical activity courses. A more comprehensive discussion is presented in Chapter III.

### **Limitations**

This study, limited by its focus on only two physical activity courses, yoga and Zumba, may not fully represent the wide array of fitness activities in educational settings. The qualitative nature of the research and use of a convenient sample for focus groups could restrict the generalizability and diversity of findings. As a result, the study's findings should be interpreted carefully and not extended to other settings without further research. Acknowledging these limitations is crucial to inform and strengthen future research on remote physical activity instruction.



## CHAPTER III: ACTION PLAN

This study was specifically designed to exert a local impact by focusing on determining the recommendations for instructor enthusiasm and feedback in fitness-based remote physical activity courses at a Midwest university. The primary objective of the research was to identify instructional strategies in a remote environment, which could contribute to enhancing the quality of instruction. Furthermore, this study laid the groundwork for a more ambitious goal of eventually developing comprehensive best practice guidelines for remote physical activity courses, which could be utilized by higher educational institutions worldwide.

### **Dissemination of Findings**

#### **University Department**

The results of this study will be disseminated at the beginning of the Fall 2023 semester to the instructors who participated in the study, the department's physical activity instructors, and any full-time faculty who are interested in attending. To effectively communicate results and recommendations, I will create a concise and easily digestible PowerPoint presentation that highlights the study's findings. This presentation will be designed to facilitate understanding and promote the implementation of the study's recommendations into course instruction. In addition, I will allocate time during the presentation for questions and discussion, to encourage attendees to engage in a dialogue that fosters a deeper understanding of the study's implications and its potential impact of their teaching practices.

#### **Conference Presentation**

In an effort to further disseminate the study's findings, I plan to present the research at a local conference, specifically at the next Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE) America's Central District Conference. This conference will provide an excellent platform to

share the study's results with university physical activity instructors from the region, fostering knowledge exchange and collaboration. Moreover, presenting at the conference will also offer the opportunity to establish connections with other physical activity instructors from different universities, which could be invaluable for data collection when designing and conducting a larger scale study in the future.

### **Journal Publication**

Lastly, I plan to disseminate the study's findings by submitting my manuscript for publication in a reputable academic journal. *The Internet & Higher Education*, a quarterly, peer-reviewed journal, is particularly suitable for this study as it focuses on internet-based learning and teaching. Notably, this journal offers the opportunity to publish with open access, which aligns with my belief that research should be freely accessible to all, without financial barriers. By publishing the study in an open-access format, I aim to ensure that the insights and recommendations derived from this research can reach a wider audience, fostering more inclusive exchange of knowledge. Further details on this manuscript are provided in Chapter II.

### **Large Scale Study**

As we progress into a post-pandemic world, higher education institutions will persist in providing courses through remote or online learning environments. Consequently, it is essential to investigate this on a larger scale to establish guidelines for instructional strategies in a remote physical activity courses and online contexts. To create a larger scale study using qualitative methods based on this case study, several adjustments to the research design must be made.

First, I would need to expand the participant pool by including more universities and a larger variety of remote fitness-based physical activity courses. This could be achieved through a multi-site study design, including universities from various regions to account for potential

regional differences in teaching practices. Next, I would develop a standardized survey to gather quantitative data from instructors and students regarding enthusiasm and feedback strategies used in remote physical activity courses. The survey designed would be based on the themes and findings from this study's results and include Likert-scale items to measure the frequency and perceived effectiveness of specific instructional strategies. This survey would enable data collection from a larger population and allow for statistical analysis.

A way to objectively measure instructor enthusiasm and feedback would need to be incorporated in the study. This could be accomplished by using video recordings of remote physical activity classes to develop a systematic observational tool to quantify the frequency and types of behaviors and cues associated with enthusiasm and feedback. This tool would provide a more standardized and objective evaluation of instructor behaviors across various physical activity courses and settings.

I would also want to investigate the impact of different enthusiasm and feedback strategies on student outcomes, such as motivation, engagement, and skill development. This could be achieved by administering pre- and post-surveys to students. These surveys would measure their perceptions of instructor enthusiasm and feedback, as well as their own motivation, engagement, and skill improvements.

To analyze all the data collected from the surveys and observational tool, I would need to use multiple statistical techniques to help identify the patterns and relationships among the variables and reveal the most effective enthusiasm and feedback strategies for instructors in remote physical activity courses. This quantitative approach will result in more generalizable findings and inform guidelines for best practices in remote physical activity instruction.

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APPENDIX A: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY COURSE INFORMATION

<b>Course</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>Focus Group Participants</b>	<b>Instructor</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Yoga I	9 (5 females, 4 males)	2 total (2 female)	“Amanda”	Tuesdays & Thursdays	9-9:50 am	Aug. 23 – Dec.10, 2021
Yoga I	16 (11 females, 5 males)	4 total (1 male, 3 female)	“Amanda”	Tuesdays & Thursdays	10-10:50 am	Aug. 23 – Dec.10, 2021
Zumba	15 (15 females)	7 total (7 female)	Researcher	Tuesdays & Thursdays	2-2:50 pm	Aug. 23 – Dec.10, 2021

## APPENDIX B: SETTING

Within the department where the physical activity courses are housed, there are 18 full-time faculty, of which 10 are tenured, four are tenure track, and four are instructors. All the full-time faculty specialize in one of four programs, public health, physical education, athletic training, or kinesiology. The department offers three undergraduate programs, two master's programs, and one doctoral program. Additionally, 30 part-time instructors are employed in the department. All physical activity courses are taught by full- and part-time instructors.

### **Physical Environment**

The qualitative research study was conducted within a vibrant, home-based Zumba class setting, reflecting the ongoing trend of digital fitness classes brought about by recent global events. The setting was specifically the basement of the researcher's house, meticulously transformed into a lively studio embodying the energetic ambiance required for Zumba training.

The room's physical environment was a blend of comfort and functionality, exhibiting a passionate pink wall as the background, infusing the space with a sense of enthusiasm and vigor. It was here that the researcher, doubling as the Zumba instructor, showcased various dance steps and routines to the students.

The dance floor, an 8-foot by 8-foot square, was an ingenious homemade creation. It was constructed by the researcher and her father using plywood and pool noodles to mimic the floating wood floors seen in university dance studios. This innovative design was not just aesthetic, but also practical, providing a softer surface that was more forgiving on the knees, thus enhancing the safety and comfort of the dance routines.

The setup for the virtual Zumba class was anchored by a 13-inch MacBook Pro laptop, which was used to connect with the students. The laptop was positioned on a four-foot step

ladder approximately 7.5 feet away from the instructor's standing position. This arrangement ensured that the entire body of the instructor was visible to the students, enabling them to follow the dance routines accurately.

The class consisted of 15 students. When all were present in the Zoom call, each student's box measured approximately 2 inches by 1 inch, offering the instructor a comprehensive view of everyone's progress and engagement.

Lighting played a crucial role in the setup, ensuring the visibility and clarity of the instructor's movements. A five-foot-tall ring light was used, positioned strategically to the right of the ladder. This provided the needed illumination, enhancing the quality of the video feed and aiding in creating a conducive learning environment for the students.

Lastly, the sound system was a critical component of this virtual Zumba class. Music, an integral part of Zumba, was played through the computer and amplified via a wireless speaker. The use of an external speaker was necessary to overcome the sound of the instructor's movements, ensuring that the music was audible and maintained its motivational role throughout the class.

## APPENDIX C: INSTRUCTOR INTERVIEW

### Enthusiasm

1. Do you think it's necessary to demonstrate enthusiasm when instructing physical activity courses? Why or why not?
2. How do you demonstrate enthusiasm when instructing physical activity courses?
3. What excites you about teaching, in general?
4. What excites you about teaching this specific physical activity course?

### Feedback

5. Do you think it's necessary to provide feedback while instructing physical activity courses? Why or why not?
6. What type(s) of feedback do you give students when instructing activity in class and can you give some examples?

### Closing

7. Is there anything else that I didn't ask about that I should consider in these topic areas (feedback and enthusiasm)?



## APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

### Displayed Enthusiasm

1. In what ways does your instructor demonstrate enthusiasm during your class and can you provide some examples?
  - a. Prompts- facial expressions, gestures, voice, humor
2. What other ways could your instructor demonstrate enthusiasm during class?

### Experienced Enthusiasm

3. Do you think your instructor enjoys teaching this course and how can you tell?

### Feedback

4. What type(s) of feedback does your instructor give and can you provide examples?
  - a. Prompts- feedback on what you're doing incorrectly, how to improve, motivate, comparing dance moves/poses, individual
5. What other types of feedback could your instructor provide during class?

### Closing

6. Is there anything else that I didn't ask about that I should consider in these topic areas (feedback and enthusiasm)?

## APPENDIX E: RESEARCHER SELF-REFLECTION

### **Self-Reflection**

Since I was also a participant in the study as a Zumba instructor, I could not interview myself for data collection about my instructional experiences. Instead, I borrowed concepts from self-study research since it allows me, as the researcher, to examine my own teaching practices (Samaras, 2011). In order to gain new insights into my instruction, I worked with a critical friend who is a colleague with over ten years of experience in supervising physical activity instructors. I used the ideas discussed and unveiled during the discussion to reflect on my personal experiences relating to enthusiasm and feedback.

### **Enthusiasm**

I demonstrate enthusiasm in many ways during my class. I always make sure to log into Zoom early so I can greet students as they log into class with a smile and wave. From the moment students log in, I am constantly smiling, positive, and upbeat. Before class starts, I'll usually have casual conversations with students where I use a lot of vocal fluctuations, varying my pitch to go up and down and use an excited tone of voice, and facial expressions, like eye contact and raising my eyebrows, to show enthusiasm.

I also use humor as a way to display enthusiasm. I like to joke around with students before and after class. I also use humor in the questions I ask students during our daily social engagement. At the start of each class, I like to give students a question to answer in our Zoom chat as a way to get to know each other better. For example, I asked students which of the seven dwarfs they are most like from Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs movie. After everyone answers in the chat, some will usually share more information, and we'll all have a good laugh.

Once we start the activity portion of class, dancing, I use all nonverbal cues, so I rely heavily on my facial expressions and body movements to demonstrate my enthusiasm. While teaching, I make sure to smile, make eye contact, and raise my eyebrows. In between songs, I will give air high fives, give thumbs up, and clap. I also clap at the beginning of some songs to bring more energy to the start of the dance. Dancing can be uncomfortable for some students and a hard workout, so I try to bring a lot of energy by making my dance moves big to get them excited to want to dance.

I enjoy teaching this class, so my excitement and passion for dancing shines throughout the entire class. I try to make the class fun by not taking myself too seriously and laughing when I mess up. I also like to nod my head to the beat of the music and sing along to some of the lyrics of the songs from time to time.

Lastly, I've noticed I have to be more enthusiastic in the remote setting, as opposed to in-person, for my enthusiasm to come through the computer screen for the students. Meaning I have to have more energy, bigger movements, and more use of humor than I would in my in-person classes.

## **Feedback**

At the start of the semester, I give the most individualized feedback. During weeks 2-5, I used one class day to dance the entire class and the other day to discuss one of the four dance styles (Merengue, Cumbia, Reggaeton, and Bellydance). During the dance style classes, we discuss the origin of the dance, music, instruments, and break down four dance movements from the specific style. When teaching students the dance movements, I start with the most basic form of the dance move and compare it to a move they have previously done or know. Then, I slowly progress the movement by making minor changes until the students are doing the intended dance

move. For example, when teaching students how to do the Merengue march, I have students start with a basic march. Everyone knows how to march, so I am able to reinforce that they are doing great (giving more confidence to students who do not feel comfortable or coordinated dancing) and give it as an option they can always come back to before progressing the move. During this time, students are also encouraged to ask questions about the movements were learning. I'll provide further feedback to students by having them perform each dance move and then give specific feedback on their form based on what is observed. Additionally, for the first few weeks of class, I will take a short break halfway through the workout to see how everyone is doing, and see if they have any questions, and allow them to grab water.

Even though the students learn sixteen dance movements from the four dance styles, I do not break down and teach every dance move we do in our workouts during class. Therefore, I tell students that I am available before and after to go through any dance movements. However, I still emphasized that there is no wrong way to dance. Everyone's body moves differently, and each dance move will look different on everyone. It is not about doing the dances perfectly; it is about moving our bodies and having fun. The students were also told they could change the dance move if they did not like it. I also demonstrate modifications for students who cannot perform specific dance movements based on injuries or physical limitations.

During the dance workout portion of our class, I usually only provide feedback to the class as a whole. I use all nonverbal cues when leading students in the dances to let them know when to change the move, what move is next, the number of repetitions, and the direction. When I am changing to a new dance move we have not done before or it is a bigger change, I will let students know by pursing my lips, raising my eye brows, and I stop smiling. To let the students know what dance move is next by previewing the dance move or pointing at a specific body part

two counts before we change to that move. I also let students know how many repetitions to do by holding up a specific number and/or counting down fingers. Lastly, students know what direction the movement is by looking up, down, right, or left, pointing right, left, up, or down, waving forward or backward, spinning my finger in a circle when they should turn, and/or mouthing the direction.

I make sure to motivate students throughout the entire dance workout, as well. Nonverbally, I will mouth, “keep it up,” “you’ve got this,” “almost there,” and “keep going” while we are dancing. I also clap at the end of a song and walk up closer to the screen to check to see how they are doing. I will also give thumbs up and a huge smile in the middle of dancing if I see students getting some dance moves they have previously struggled with learning or performing. Every few songs I will mouth, “Still doing good?,” and give thumbs up with a head nod or thumbs down with a head shake.

APPENDIX F: CODEBOOK

**Enthusiasm**

Theme	Subthemes	Definition	Examples from Transcripts
Nonverbal Communication	Facial Expressions	Instructor displays enthusiasm through use of nonverbal facial expressions (e.g., smiling, raising eyebrows, etc.)	“I guess, one that you do is like you smile really big and raise your eyebrows” (Emma, Zumba Focus Group)
	Hand Gestures	Instructor displays enthusiasm through use of nonverbal hand gestures (e.g., thumbs up, high hands, high fives, clapping, etc.)	<p>“Yeah, she definitely gave us a thumbs up. ... Like, ‘good job’ with thumbs up or like high hands, or whatever you want to call those.” (Danielle, Yoga Focus Group)</p> <p>“You do that, after pretty much every single song. Like give us like high five to the camera and even though, like you, can’t really high five back. It’s still great, like it feels like you care about us, even though you don’t get to see us in person.” (Mary, Zumba Focus Group)</p> <p>“And you even still like, you normally clap or give thumbs up.” (Fiona, Zumba Focus Group)</p>
	Body Language	Instructor displays enthusiasm through use of nonverbal body language (e.g., head nodding, posture, etc.)	<p>“and then like nod your head to just to get us kind of into it.” (Emma, Zumba Focus Group)</p> <p>“I can see it in a lot in your posture on camera that you just look very alert and very confident in what you do and I think that brings enthusiasm to the whole class.” (Mary, Zumba Focus Group)</p>

Theme	Subthemes	Definition	Examples from Transcripts
Instructor's Energy	Energy Level	Instructor displays enthusiasm by exhibiting a high level of energy (e.g., energetic, positive, cheerful, upbeat, hyped up, etc.)	<p>“She has that really high energy. Whenever she talks or demonstrates her classes.” (Naomi, Yoga Focus Group)</p> <p>“I always think that when you start class, you are always very energetic and very happy to be there. . . You bring very good positivity and make people excited to do it.” (Mary, Zumba Focus Group)</p> <p>“Yeah, I’d have to agree with all that too and it’s just very like cheerful and upbeat and it just kind of makes it, you can just feel the energy, I guess, a lot more.” (Emma, Zumba Focus Group)</p>
	Movement Choice	Instructor displays enthusiasm through the movements he/she choose to use (e.g., big, bold, upbeat, going all out, etc.)	<p>“And I’ll also say like just your movements how they’re so big brings a lot of energy to like, you can make, you don’t have to just go through the motions of the dance, you can go all out and actually enjoy it so.” (Emma, Zumba Focus Group)</p> <p>“I would say that she’s very upbeat in her movements and she makes a very bold and big so everyone kind of can catch on.” (Emma, Zumba Focus Group)</p>
	Singing	Instructor displayed enthusiasm by singing along with music during class	<p>“I like the aspect for classes like this that you know like sing along with the words, a lot of the time, and it just makes the whole, it brings life to the entire routine to. It, just like brings happiness and like energy.” (Mary, Zumba Focus Group)</p>
Vocal Delivery	Tone	Instructor displays enthusiasm through the	<p>“Delivery, yes. It’s very, it’s just very exciting like, I know, like</p>

Theme	Subthemes	Definition	Examples from Transcripts
		tone of voice used during class (e.g., excited, enthusiastic, happy, etc.)	<p>you're just very enthusiastic with your tone of voice that it makes it very easy to get on board with the whole thing, because when I first got into this class I was super apprehensive towards it, I'm like this is going to be dumb, but you make it very, well, just by the way you talk about it and talk to us, you make people excited to do it, and look forward to it." (Mary, Zumba Focus Group)</p> <p>"The instructors vocal tone seemed to be happy and excited." (Yoga Observational Field Notes)</p>
	Pitch	Instructor displays enthusiasm by changing the vocal pitch used during class (e.g., normal/lower to higher pitch)	<p>"Her voice like changed in pitch, and she changed the tone and she sounded enthusiastic, and she was like, 'we're going to talk about the chakras today and here's what they're about and everything.' It was just it was really cool hearing her talk about it because she sounded passionate." (Danielle, Yoga Focus Group)</p> <p>"Her voice would get a little high like she's get all excited." (Naomi, Yoga Focus Group)</p>
Learning Environment	Welcoming	Instructor displayed enthusiasm by creating a welcoming environment for students	"Um, she makes any class she teaches very welcoming. In that it's okay if you have no idea what you're doing in that class, or I guess in general." (Naomi, Yoga Focus Group)
	Supportive	Instructor displayed enthusiasm by offering support to students (e.g., through further discussion, to lean on,	"And she would always go. 'Okay Danielle that's really great that you're realizing that, if there's anything you need help with if there's anything you want



Theme	Subthemes	Definition	Examples from Transcripts
		willingness to help students, etc.)	<p>to discuss further, like just let me know. I'm here to help you. The distance doesn't matter if you need anything we can talk forever.” (Danielle, Yoga Focus Group)</p> <p>“In that it's okay to feel the way you're feeling and that she is there for someone for you to lean on. If you need anything.” (Naomi, Yoga Focus Group)</p>
	Clear Explanations	Instructor displayed enthusiasm by providing clear explanations (e.g., what they're doing, willingness to explain exercises/movements multiple times, etc.)	<p>“So, there's almost this asking that I have to do, but also, probably an over emphasized enthusiasm, yeah, about what we're doing and what it is, so I can convince them, like, be here, stay on your mat, you know, I can't force them and I'm not going to because they're adults.” (Instructor Interview)</p> <p>“She was always willing to explain or double explain or triple explain.” (Danielle, Yoga Focus Group)</p>
	Fun	Instructor displayed enthusiasm by making the class fun and feel less like a workout	<p>“I think it's important too, that with the enthusiasm, that you make it feel like it's for fun rather than actually a workout. Because that's my favorite type of workout, is when I don't realize that I'm actually working out because cardio sucks, if you think about it. So, I think the enthusiasm definitely helps with the fact that you are actually getting physical activity and making it a fun way to do it.” (Emma, Zumba Focus Group).</p>
	Tone of Class	Instructor displayed enthusiasm by intentionally setting the	<p>“And then I think, um, the before and after as well, has been really essential for me in setting the</p>

Theme	Subthemes	Definition	Examples from Transcripts
		tone for the class in how he/she starts and ends class	tone. Um, yeah, yeah, and how I present it and how I close it. You know, when I close yoga it's usually a bit, like, chill because were all savasana brain." (Instructor Interview)
Instructor's Demeanor	Attitude	Instructor displayed enthusiasm through the attitude they exude during class (authentic, some you want to be around, etc.)	<p>“So, I think for me, I had to just find a balance, this kind of surrender and acceptance within myself of I just have to show up authentically and be enthusiastic even if I think I’m sounding stupid because I’m like, ‘hey, does anyone have anything to say.’ Just have this really light sense of being for them, that’s all that I can do.” (Instructor Interview)</p> <p>“She kind of has that attitude or that vibe of someone you want to be around. Like I said before, I had her for two other classes, and I also talked to her outside of class about personal things. So, she it just has that vibe of someone that I could trust, and when I talk to you about anything really.” (Naomi, Yoga Focus Group)</p> <p>“Honestly, her personality, she shows enthusiasm.” (Naomi, Yoga Focus Group)</p>
	Humor	Instructor displayed enthusiasm by engaging students with their use of humor (e.g., bring funny, telling jokes)	“I think humor is really huge, actually. I actually saw that in one of the evaluations. It was like, ‘did your professor weave humor into class?’ And I was like, of course, that is an essential piece. To be lighthearted, to have fun, to be funny, I think that’s what engages people. I’m a jokester

Theme	Subthemes	Definition	Examples from Transcripts
			anyway, I like to just joke and laugh, and I think that helps a lot.” (Instructor Interview)
Instructor’s Topic-Related Enthusiasm	Personal Experience	Instructor displayed enthusiasm by sharing their personal connection and experiences about the subject matter being taught	“She brought her personal experiences in. Which kind of like, to me, if you like, bring personal stuff and you like are showing enthusiasm in the subject because you’re like, ‘hey I have this great connection with this, which is why I appreciate it.’ I just thought she was really, really, really good at bringing her personal thoughts in.” (Danielle, Yoga Focus Group)
	Passion	Instructor displayed enthusiasm through the passion they exude for the subject matter being taught	“Yeah, like you said you can just kind of see it in all the enthusiasm that you do give and also, I feel like it’s, not just for us you’re doing it for yourself as well. I feel like you have to have the passion behind it, to be able to show it, as well as you do, and for others to want to do it, too, so.” (Emma, Zumba Focus Group)

## Feedback

Theme	Subthemes	Definition	Examples from Transcripts
Encouraging Feedback	Motivation	Instructor provided motivational feedback to encourage the students to keep going during the workouts	“She would have, maybe there was some poses that a lot of us for trying her way of doing it, and she would always say, ‘keep going, keep going, we’re almost done, we’re almost done.’ Like, if you want like that moment when you’re like have your legs, all the way stretched up and you’re getting tired she’ll be, ‘oh just keep going, we’re almost done, we’re almost done.’ And then, when we finally get done, she’ll go, ‘good job guys, you did it.’” (Naomi, Yoga Focus Group)
	Praise	Instructor provided encouraging feedback by praising the students when they were doing well or trying when doing an exercise/movement	“There was one time that I asked for help for like my downward dog because I couldn’t get my feet right. And she was like, ‘great job Danielle! You’re doing great! Like just push yourself a little bit more. You’ve got it and you’re doing great.’” (Danielle, Yoga Focus Group)
Nonverbal Cues	Directional	Instructor provided nonverbal feedback using directional cues (e.g., body language, hand gestures [looking and/or pointing to the right, left, forward, or back, mouthing the direction], etc.)	“Yeah, shows like kind of what directions to go. Maybe a little bit, or point, yeah the direction and kind of the direction kind of goes into the movement like if you point to the ground in front of you to the right, then, we know that we’re going to be doing something with our right foot. So, I feel like just the pointing in the direction helps a lot with obviously direction, but also kind of what movements come

Theme	Subthemes	Definition	Examples from Transcripts
			<p>next.” (Emma, Zumba Focus Group)</p> <p>“Mouths “back”, points down and back, looks down and back, furrows eyebrows, before crossing feet to the back.” (Zumba Observational Field Notes)</p>
	<p>Movement Preview</p>	<p>Instructor provided nonverbal feedback by previewing an exercise/movement that was next in the workout/routine</p>	<p>“I think it gives me personally, like a sneak peek if we’re just learning the song or a reminder of what’s to come.” (Mary, Zumba Focus Group)</p> <p>“Previews next move by pushing right arm across body and tapping foot to the side before performing it eight times.” (Zumba Observational Field Notes)</p>
	<p>Movement Changes</p>	<p>Instructor provided nonverbal feedback to let students know of an upcoming change in an exercise/movement (e.g., facial expressions, hand gestures, body language, etc.)</p>	<p>“Um, I would say when you’re teaching us the dance moves, there is a lot more verbal cues and then, as far as doing the dance moves with music it transitions to facial expressions and body language.” (Josie, Zumba Focus Group)</p> <p>“Raising eyebrows, holding up left hand in stop sign, mouthing ‘take it down’, before body rolling down.” (Zumba Observational Field Notes)</p>
	<p>Repetition</p>	<p>Instructor provided nonverbal feedback using repetition cues to let students know how many repetitions to do of the exercise/movement</p>	<p>“Holding up two fingers on left hand, mouthing ‘we have two’, before kicking left leg out twice” (Zumba Observational Field Notes)</p>

Theme	Subthemes	Definition	Examples from Transcripts
		(e.g., hand gestures [holding up fingers, counting down with fingers], mouthing the number of repetitions, etc.)	“Waves left hand at herself then holds up four fingers before walking forward while counting down with her fingers as she does, mouthing ‘four, three, two’” (Zumba Observational Field Notes)
Performance-Related Feedback	Prescriptive	Instructor provided feedback to adjust and improve the exercise/movement (e.g., alignment cues, form cues, physical sensation, movement/exercise options, etc.)	<p>“Coming right to center, with the spine stacked right over the tailbone.” (Amanda, Yoga Observational Field Notes)</p> <p>“Um, a lot of times I can see this (shrugs shoulders up to ears) happening, um, and I’m like, ‘soften your shoulders, roll the neck, drop them down a little bit’. Um, that is one that I see, that I almost always see that they kind of sit like this (shows sitting straight up, stiff, with shoulders by ears). And so I’m like, ‘okay, soften in the chest, relax your neck, relax your jaw’. Um, ‘soft eyes, relax your eyebrows’, I’m always saying stuff like that.” (Instructor Interview)</p> <p>“Feel that nice lift happening out of your pelvis” (Yoga Observational Field Notes)</p> <p>“I do like, I don’t remember which student, it was that mentioned that they couldn’t, when we drop, go, stop, pause, or when we turn and drop down, said they couldn’t squat and instead of you being like, well if you can’t do it, just don’t do the move just stand there. You gave other movements, they could do</p>

Theme	Subthemes	Definition	Examples from Transcripts
			<p>instead of that, which I feel helps a lot, instead of being like well you don't know how to do I don't know what to do for you, just figure it out, you're like, well you know if you can't do this move, you can do with this, or this way. Or when we squat for our belly dancing, well you don't have to squat too far, you can just bend your knees, a little there you can do this, you always try to find a way to give us feedback if we can't do something." (Fiona, Zumba Focus Group)</p>
	Demonstration	<p>Instructor provided feedback by demonstrating what the exercise/movement should look like when performed correctly</p>	<p>"If, if it was like, if it wasn't verbal it was like her, saying, 'okay class, I'm going to like show you how to do this, and like she'd show us real quick.'" (Danielle, Yoga Focus Group)</p>
	Corrective	<p>Instructor provided corrective feedback by acknowledging an error in an exercise/movement and providing a correction</p>	<p>"Yeah, but she's like, 'no that's not exactly how you do it' and 'here's how you do it.' And if you need me to like, she would always like move the camera closer too, so that way we could see her more specifically. God, it was like never negative correction, it was always, 'not exactly, almost there, and here I'll show you what I'm doing.'" (Danielle, Yoga Focus Group)</p>
	Comparative	<p>Instructor provided feedback by comparing the exercise/movement being performed to a movement the student has previously performed</p>	<p>"Round your spine and push the hands forward like you're pushing water." (Yoga Observational Field Notes)</p>

Theme	Subthemes	Definition	Examples from Transcripts
Direction of Feedback	Group	Instructor provided feedback to the class as a whole	“Yeah, and I, like the type of feedback like not really calling specific people out for it just kind of making broader statements just like, hey maybe if they want to like fix their movement, they can but not calling people out directly to be, because it’s kind of you make it your own kind of thing, so I feel like it gave them the opportunity to feel like it’s okay to mess up since you’re not directly calling them out for what they’re doing wrong because there’s no particular way you have to do a move, I guess.” (Emma, Zumba Focus Group)
	Individual	Instructor provided personalized feedback to a specific individual	“There was a couple of times she was like, ‘okay, if you don’t want me to call on you and point stuff out, you can turn your camera away if you’re not comfortable with that. If you’re comfortable with it, I’m going to try and help you.’ But then we were doing downward dog, or something, and that is one I struggle with and so I was like, okay, I’m going to leave my camera up because then she can help. She was like, ‘alright, Danielle, I see what you’re doing. Try and shift your hands a little bit and maybe that will help you reach out a little further.’” (Danielle, Yoga Focus Group)
Outside of Class Feedback	Reflections	Instructor provided feedback to students about exercises/movements	“Um, but I have done my best, my technique has been, really via their reflections, um, their weekly reflections, to have



Theme	Subthemes	Definition	Examples from Transcripts
		during weekly reflections	<p>them hopefully elitist, and for the most part, I think it's been going pretty well, make them think and share what's going on in their body and mind. And I really spend time answering each of their reflections, um, to give them, um, that's my source of personal feedback" (Instructor Interview)</p> <p>"That's because sometimes I would talk about my movement in class and I'd go okay I don't think I felt like this one was for me and I don't feel like I did too well during this or I feel like this movement was great, and I think I did absolutely wonderful. But it just kind of really depended on like that week's reflection for me." (Danielle, Yoga Focus Group)</p>
	Before and After Class	Instructor provided feedback to students directly after class	"Whereas, um, in my yoga classes usually if someone really has a question they stay after. I have had some people meet one-on-one with me." (Instructor Interview)

## APPENDIX G: RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY

The researcher is a full-time faculty member at a university in the Midwest, teaching both undergraduate kinesiology and physical activity courses since 2013. Having taught 11 different physical activity courses, including Zumba, Yoga, Power Yoga, Pilates, Kickboxing, Hip Hop, Barre Fitness, Indoor Cycling, Cross Training, Weight Training, and Volleyball, the researcher is experienced in instructing these courses. For the past year and a half, the researcher has also instructed the Zumba course in a remote, synchronous environment.

This research study is set to take place at a large university in the Midwest, within the physical activity courses scheduled in a remote learning environment. The researcher will also take on the role of participant in this research study. The researcher did not know the other instructor participant before the study, however, ten of the student focus group participants knew the researcher from taking previous or current courses with her.

Beliefs on the researcher's philosophical paradigm and topics of study are also important to disclose. The researcher's philosophical paradigm is that of constructivism, which Honebein (1996) first described as "an approach that asserts that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences" (as cited in Adom et al., 2016, p. 2). The constructivist paradigm has shaped both the researcher's design for this study and instruction style. The two topics of study are also essential to discuss as the researcher believes both instructor enthusiasm and feedback are essential to effective instruction. When instructing physical activity courses, the researcher uses displayed enthusiasm and feedback techniques throughout the class. Additionally, the researcher has lectured on these techniques to two of her undergraduate courses (Group Exercise Leadership and Kinesiology Practicum) and to local physical education teachers.