

Teachers Methodological Strategies and School Coexistence in Physical Education

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Abstract

The learning environment influences the teaching-learning process as well as the welfare of the educational community members. The problems of discipline and coexistence in class are a general concern in mandatory secondary education. The purpose of this research is to identify some methodological strategies that could be applied by teachers when students in compulsory secondary education engage in disruptive behaviors in order to improve classroom management. The participants are 147 instructors of Physical Education (PE) who are teaching actively in institutions of compulsory secondary education. Participants completed two questionnaires which created “ad hoc” to evaluate the students’ problematic behaviors regarding coexistence in these classes. A description was made of the characteristics of the teaching staff and their center, for which the absolute and relative frequencies were described in the qualitative variables and the mean values and standard deviation were calculated for the quantitative variables. The results of this research provide guidance for the use of different classroom management techniques and schools organization considering such problem behaviors. In fact, most of the teaching staff consider important the use of teaching strategies to carry out PE class with less problems of Coexistence.

Keywords

Conflict, Compulsory Secondary Education, Classroom Management, School Organization, Didactic

1. Introduction

Violence, rejection and exclusion represent phenomena that in recent years have been spreading in our societies, more and more. In the case of Spain, cases of

school violence are detected more frequently in education centers (Martínez-Otero, 2001; Moliner y Martí, 2002; Narejo y Salazar, 2002; Jares, 2006; Cerezo, 2007). In the same sense, González (2005) expresses himself, noting that conflictive situations have become one of the main problems that teachers face on a day-to-day basis. However, Campo, Fernández and Grisaleña (2005: p. 123) indicate that “the levels of violence and antisocial behavior in schools are not higher than in the past” and Rodríguez et al. (2004) conclude, after their study, that in recent years violence among peers in the school setting has not increased. But, nevertheless, they highlight the presence of aggressive behaviors in interpersonal relationships among schoolchildren, which in recent years have constituted and still constitute one of the main complaints of both parents and educators, at the same time that they point out as one of the main problems and object of intervention as it seems to be a good predictor of social maladjustment in adulthood.

In this regard, Moreno et al. (2007) indicate that the results of the reviewed studies show, in general, that discipline problems in the educational field are common to each and every one of the areas that make up the Education curriculum. However, Downing (1996) considers that “the gym” poses unique management problems, such as time lost in commuting, entry and exit routines, attendance control, skill demonstrations, delivery of “feedback”, higher student-teacher ratio. These arguments come to justify some characteristics of the area that must be taken into account in its management.

The present research tries to know variables related to the participation and organization, as well as the methodology of the PE teachers in relation to School Coexistence. It is framed in the Educational Research Project with reference PIV-069/08, funded by the Junta de Andalucía and complements other publications (Gil-Espínosa, Chillón, & Delgado, 2016; Gil-Espínosa, Delgado, & Chillón, 2016).

2. Methods

The research design was based on a population-based cross-sectional study through the application of questionnaires addressed to Physical Education (PE) teachers who teach ESO levels in public schools in the Autonomous Community of Andalusia.

The inclusion criteria of the participants were two: 1) To be an active PE teacher during the 2007/2008 academic year in a public school that teaches the ESO stage in Andalusia. 2) Have completed, at least, the basic data of the first questionnaire (so that the analysis of the study variables was possible) and completely the second questionnaire (which deals with the measures applied before the appearance of disruptive behaviors in class).

2.1. Sample

The population under study is professors from the PE area who work in Andalusian public schools. Out of a total of 844 centers, 147 questionnaires were re-

ceived from 110 different centers, of which 82 questionnaires were from 59 centers from localities with three or more centers, 46 questionnaires from 38 centers in the provincial capitals, and 19 questionnaires from 13 centers from localities with one or two centers.

The sample size was 147 subjects, which for the supposed simple random sample (MAS), and of maximum indeterminacy $p = q = 50\%$, and for a confidence level of 95% it supposes a maximum sampling error of $\pm 8\%$. We must point out the sample size as a limitation of the study that does not allow the results to be generalized but does not alter the results of the study, given the nature of its objectives.

Taking into account the above criteria, **Table 1** shows the number of centers to which the questionnaires were sent by post, distributed by province. They add up to a total of 471 shipments, about 844 centers.

2.2. Data Collection Instrument: Questionnaires

The instruments used were two questionnaires specifically designed for this purpose. Questionnaire 1 called “Strategies used by the center and the Physical Education teacher in relation to Coexistence (EUCEFC)” provides data on the participants for the present study. Questionnaire 2 called “Measures taken against Behaviors contrary to Coexistence and Participation in Physical Education class (MA3CPEF)” collects the most frequent measures and contemplates the option of introducing a new one by the respondents. The data in this publication correspond to questionnaire 1.

Table 1. Sample data in relation to the characteristics of the participating teachers.

Sample personal data		n	%/Average (D.T.)
Age	<i>Average (D.T.)</i>	147	40.03 (9.59)
Sex	Man	101	68.71
	Woman	46	31.29
Teach 1° ESO	<i>Yes</i>	96	65.31
Teach 2° ESO	<i>Yes</i>	94	63.95
Teach 3° ESO	<i>Yes</i>	82	55.78
Teach 4° ESO	<i>Yes</i>	90	61.22
Experience as teacher (years)	<i>Average (D.T.)</i>	147	13.71 (8.95)
Experience in the school (years)	<i>Average (D.T.)</i>	147	7.29 (6.72)
Students' ratio 1° ESO	<i>Average (D.T.)</i>	96	26.47 (4.68)
Students' ratio 2° ESO	<i>Average (D.T.)</i>	94	25.79 (4.72)
Students' ratio 3° ESO	<i>Average (D.T.)</i>	82	26.32 (4.87)
Students' ratio 4° ESO	<i>Average (D.T.)</i>	90	26.73 (4.19)
Do you hold or have you held a managerial position?	<i>Yes</i>	46	31.29
How many teachers teach PE in the center?	<i>Average (D.T.)</i>	147	2.88 (1.91)

The elaboration of these questionnaires began with a bibliographic review in search of the conditioning factors of coexistence in educational centers as well as similar investigations, after which an initial proposal was prepared to be reviewed by seven experts, representative people for their training and profession in relation to school coexistence, two university professors of Education Sciences, a university professor of Physical Activity and Sports Sciences, a Doctor and Inspector of Education, a Doctor and Counselor of Secondary Education, a Director of the Center of teacher training and a teacher of Secondary Education of Physical Education. The questionnaires were redesigned with the improvements proposed by the group of experts before proceeding to the last phase, applied to fellow professors and ESO teachers, as a pilot study. Finally, the results of the pilot study were analyzed in order to finalize the writing of the data collection instruments, and the final questionnaires were obtained.

2.3. Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaires were sent to each of the public centers in Andalusian towns with three or more ESO centers by post, to the attention of the P.E. Department, including a stamped envelope and with the return data filled in for their return, along with the cover letter.

The rest of the centers, in localities with one or two ESO centers, were sent by email, giving the option of answering in electronic file, in an application designed “online” or by printing the questionnaires or requesting them, to your shipment by post.

A week after the questionnaires were sent, an email was sent to the centers, for the attention of the P.E. Department, presenting and informing them of their sending. After sending the e-mail, some of the members of the PE Department of the centers were contacted by telephone that had not confirmed receipt or sent a response.

2.4. Statistic Analysis

A description was made of the characteristics of the teaching staff and their center, for which the absolute and relative frequencies were described in the qualitative variables and the mean values and the standard deviation (SD) were calculated for the quantitative ones.

The data were recorded and processed through the statistical program “Statistical Package for Social Science” (SPSS) version 15.0.

3. Results

3.1. Sample

Table 1 reflects the data corresponding to the teachers participating in the study, out of a total of 147 subjects and questionnaires, 101 male teachers (68.71%) and 46 female teachers (31.29%) participated, with an average, of 13.71-years seniority in the faculty, and an average age of 40.03 years.

3.2. School Participation and Organization

Table 2 shows the results corresponding to school participation and organization. 78.4% of the teaching staff answered that “quite a few times” or “always” they reflect on their strategies and reactions after each class and 57.6% that they comment with their colleagues from the Department the strategies and measures adopted in conflict situations.

Table 2. Results related to school participation and organization.

Results related to school participation and organization		n	%
Spend time solving group conflicts: identification of problems, analysis of causes and consequences, generation of solutions, decision-making ...	Never	3	2.1%
	Ever	76	52.8%
	Many times	44	30.6%
	Always	20	13.9%
	Don't know	1	0.7%
Take care of the environmental conditions (cleanliness, decoration, order) of the P.E. classroom	Never	2	1.4%
	Ever	14	9.7%
	Many times	71	49.3%
	Always	55	38.2%
	Don't know	2	1.4%
Reflect on their strategies and reactions in each class	Never	1	0.7%
	Ever	29	20.1%
	Many times	66	45.8%
	Always	47	32.6%
	Don't know	1	0.7%
Discuss with department colleagues the strategies and measures adopted in conflict situations	Never	4	2.8%
	Ever	49	34.0%
	Many times	54	37.5%
	Always	29	20.1%
	Don't know	8	5.6%
Organize the activities, material and instructions in successive and natural sequences so that the transition moments are as short as possible	Never	0	0.0%
	Ever	7	4.9%
	Many times	68	47.2%
	Always	67	46.5%
	Don't know	2	1.4%
The environmental conditions (cleanliness, decoration, order) of the center are taken care of	Never	3	2.1%
	Ever	33	22.9%
	Many times	68	47.2%
	Always	39	27.1%
	Don't know	1	0.7%
In the preparation of school hours in each school year there are pedagogical-organizational criteria that take into account the prevention of Coexistence problems	Never	28	19.4%
	Ever	40	27.8%
	Many times	34	23.6%
	Always	16	11.1%
	Don't know	26	18.1%

Figure 1 shows the data corresponding to two questions related to student participation, the first in relation to the collective organization of the class (system of positions, commissions, distribution of responsibilities) and the second with the existence in the center of some support system among students (student-tutor, student-companion, student-friend, older brother, recess helpers, student-counselor ...). Only 2.8% of the teaching staff answered that the students “never” participated in the collective organization of the class.

3.3. Methodological Strategies in Physical Education

Table 3 shows the results corresponding to the methodology in the P.E. area. 90.1% answered that they used positive social reinforcement “many times” or “always” in the face of positive behaviors, 74.4% that they used an evaluation aimed primarily at highlighting the students’ progress, and 79.4% that they used the sense of humor in class, and 73.1% that active recesses, activities and games are organized from the Department.

Figure 2 shows the answers to the question about the interruption of the activity and the call of attention to the students in the event of the appearance of mild disruptive behavior. 38.3% affirm that they interrupt the activity “many times” or “always”.

Table 3. Results in relation to methodological strategies in PE.

Results in relation to methodological strategies in PE		n	%
Is positive social reinforcement frequently used for positive behaviors (praise, congratulations ...)?	Never	0	0.0%
	Ever	12	8.5%
	Many times	64	45.4%
	Always	63	44.7%
	Don't know	2	1.4%
Do the students make decisions relevant to their learning process (way of working, contents to work, form of evaluation, dates of evaluations)?	Never	9	6.4%
	Ever	65	46.1%
	Many times	62	44.0%
	Always	2	1.4%
	Don't know	3	2.1%
Is an evaluation used primarily aimed at highlighting and verifying progress in student learning?	Never	3	2.1%
	Ever	26	18.4%
	Many times	59	41.8%
	Always	46	32.6%
	Don't know	7	5.0%
Do you use a sense of humor with the students?	Never	0	0.0%
	Ever	28	19.9%
	Many times	79	56.0%
	Always	33	23.4%
	Don't know	1	0.7%

Continued

At the end of each session, are the aspects studied discussed and those of the next one introduced?	Never	12	8.5%
	Ever	61	43.3%
	Many times	54	38.3%
	Always	14	9.9%
	Don't know	0	0.0%
Are active recesses, activities and games organized by the PE Department?	Never	13	9.2%
	Ever	24	17.0%
	Many times	64	45.4%
	Always	39	27.7%
	Don't know	1	0.7%
Are complementary extracurricular activities carried out as positive reinforcement for having developed suitable Coexistence climates?	Never	12	8.5%
	Ever	61	43.3%
	Many times	44	31.2%
	Always	22	15.6%
	Don't know	2	1.4%

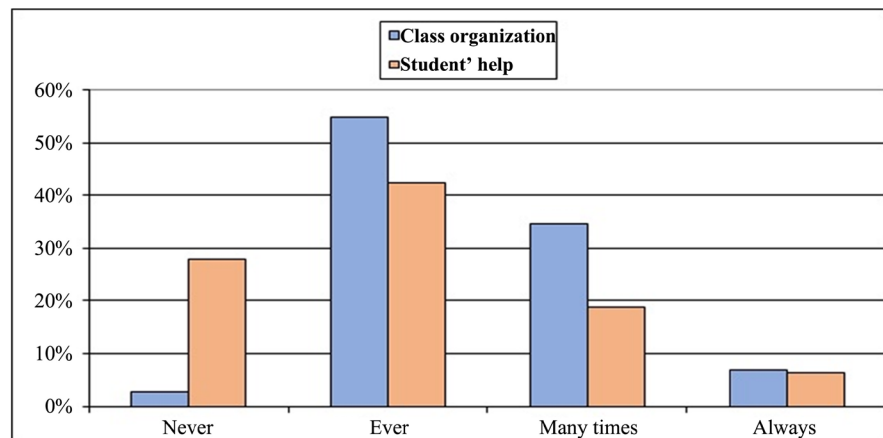


Figure 1. Participation of students in the collective organization of the class and existence of a system of help between students in the center.

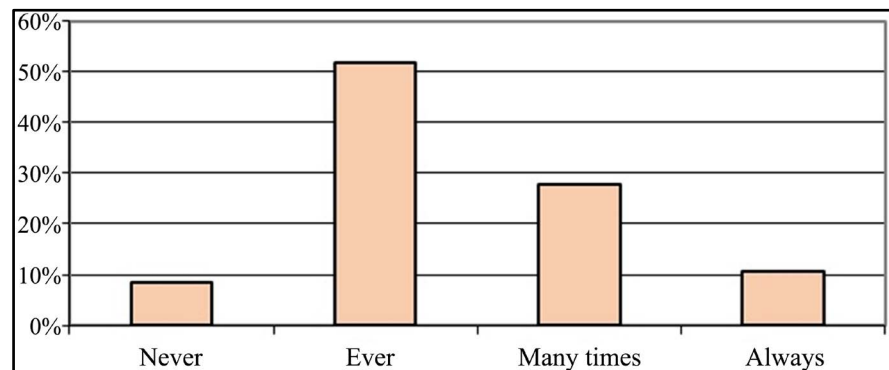


Figure 2. Answers to the question about the interruption of the activity and call of attention to the students in case of the appearance of a mild disruptive behavior.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

98% of the teaching staff consider relevantly the use of teaching strategies to carry out PE class with less problems of Coexistence, something coinciding with the approach of [Moreno and Torrego \(1999\)](#). They state that educational research shows that the variables of what we call classroom management and organization are the ones that most influence and determine not only the frequency of appearance of antisocial behaviors, but also student learning, academic performance and “health” of interpersonal relationships, as well as other authors such as [Fernández-Balboa, \(1991\)](#), [Downing \(1996\)](#) and [Jares \(2006\)](#).

That is why teacher training and updating must be continuous and effective, on the basis that conflicts are an integral part of the profession ([Fernández, 2007](#)) and the teacher must have and know strategies and lines of action on the factors that intervene in the teaching-learning process ([Rosales, 2004](#); [González, 2005](#)).

In a general sense, we can affirm that the responses of the surveyed teachers coincide with what, based on the bibliographic review carried out, we could call good classroom management. Even so, it would be advisable to take into account the contributions made by authors such as [Kounin \(1970\)](#), cited by [Lera et al. \(2007\)](#), [Medley \(1979\)](#), cited by [Cuellar and Delgado \(2000\)](#), [Bru et al. \(2002\)](#), [Rincón \(2002\)](#), [Lera et al. \(2007\)](#), [Moreno and Torrego \(2007\)](#), among them the convenience of allowing students to influence their own learning processes, always knowing what is happening, reacting appropriately to critical situations, being able to change and organize when things are not going well, use non-verbal cues, praise positive behaviors, do not let mild behavior interrupt work, organize activities in successive sequences, solve problems at low levels, propose group work and ask the students for their interests. Among those that stand out always seek the improvement of the student’s self-image through success, guidance and individual discussion, develop reflective, critical thinking, active listening, assertiveness, negotiation and social skills. Regarding relationships, they help to create a positive class climate, actions such as maintaining a respectful role for teachers towards other classmates and students and attending to diversity. This transmits security to the student, order and generates expectations of success. Likewise, it favors communication, encourages cooperation and the development of respectful attitudes, establishing clear, shared, reinforced and updated rules.

In any case, it is necessary to look for new mechanisms and means to become families more actively involved with the school. At the same time, the action of specialized social services in the families of students with behavior problems would be convenient based on the results obtained by [Estévez \(2005\)](#) and [Musitu et al. \(2007\)](#).

[Jensen et al. \(2007\)](#) propose different strategies to improve the family-school relationship, among which are regularly making telephone calls to parents with a positive message, making sure that parents attend meetings, with reminders or

calls and show interest in children's families and their life outside of school by asking questions. It would be logical to think that the use of new communication technologies could facilitate and improve communication and relationships between families and the school.

In conclusion, it would be recommended that teachers use positive social reinforcement in the face of positive behaviors and they assume a system evaluation aimed primarily at highlighting the students' progress. At the same time, teachers and schools should take care of the environmental conditions (cleanliness, decoration, order) of the P.E. classroom and organize the activities, material and instructions in successive and natural sequences so that the transition moments are as short as possible.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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