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**FIGHTS AT SCHOOL: TEACHING STRATEGIES OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS****LUTAS NA ESCOLA: ESTRATÉGIAS DE ENSINO DE PROFESSORES DE EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA**

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**RESUMO**

O estudo objetivou identificar as estratégias de ensino de professores de Educação Física para tematizar o conteúdo lutas no contexto escolar. No estudo de descritivo, participaram 77 professores de Educação Física de escolas estaduais da Região da Grande Florianópolis. Na coleta de dados foi utilizado um questionário. Os resultados apontaram a baixa adesão dos professores no ensino das lutas, sendo identificadas como estratégias o ensino centrado nos exercícios motores, nas modalidades de lutas, na demonstração de técnicas, na capoeira e no jogo. Pode-se concluir que o ensino das lutas no contexto investigado é escasso, por apenas 18 professores tematizarem lutas em suas aulas. Pode-se observar a mediação dos professores em utilizar suas estratégias para propiciar este conteúdo aos alunos. Pode-se concluir que poucos professores tematizam o conteúdo de lutas, visto que os resultados apresentados revelam a escassez desta tematização, apontando para o distanciamento das lutas no contexto escolar.

**Palavras-chave:** Artes marciais. Ensino. Educação física.

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to identify the teaching strategies of Physical Education teachers to address fights as a content in the school context. A total of 77 Physical Education teachers from state schools in the Greater Florianópolis Region participated in the descriptive research. A questionnaire was used for data collection. The results showed that the teachers were not used to teaching fights, and identified as strategies a teaching centered on motor exercises, fight modalities, technique demonstration, capoeira and games. It can be concluded that the teaching of fights in the investigated context is scarce, as only 18 teachers addressed them in their classes. It is possible to observe the mediation of the teachers in using their strategies to provide this content to their students. It can be concluded that few teachers address the fights content, since the findings reveal the scarcity of this approach, pointing to a disconnection between fights and the school context.

**Keywords:** Martial arts. Teaching. Physical education.

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**Introduction**

Among Physical Education contents, organized in the curricular programs of educational units, fights are characterized as unpredictable bodily practices, between two or more opponents, with actions that occur simultaneously, which, in addition to bodily practice, show attitudes of respect, ethics, as well as historical and philosophical concepts, constituting itself as a macro content in school Physical Education<sup>1-3</sup>.

Although fights are legitimized as a Physical Education content, some concerns emerge when it comes to their development in the school scenario<sup>4,5</sup>. As factors linked to the aspects that guide the teaching practice at school, the teaching of a single type of fight stands out and concerns only those modalities of fight with which the teacher has or had greater contact as an athlete or even a master<sup>4,6-8</sup>. This content limitation repeats itself in the teaching of fights at school, as the literature shows that, additionally, while teaching their classes in other environments, educators make use of the same teaching proposals, both in gyms and schools, for instance, whether for children, youths or adults<sup>9,10</sup>.

In the methodological process of classes in different contexts, said classes should not have the same objective, as this may restrict motor and cognitive development<sup>7,11</sup>, in view of the need to respect each stage of the student's development. However, teaching is still centered on technique, with excessive gestural reproduction commanded by the teacher, focused only on motor gestures, which neglect the content dimensions that fights can provide and cause students to misunderstand the fights content throughout the classes<sup>12-14</sup>.

It can be said that fights have been usually presented in the school context in a rustic manner and aimed at reductionist practices<sup>5,15,16</sup>. Teaching requires pedagogical strategies capable of meeting the dimensions of the contents (attitudinal, conceptual and procedural), prioritizing the main characteristics of fights (combat, rules, opposition, goal centered on the opponent's body, actions of a simultaneous nature, and unpredictability), as well as prioritizing the historical, philosophical and moral context that guides a content supported by its historical and social importance<sup>3,13</sup>.

Specifically, teaching fights requires adapting rules and spaces, including all students, encouraging problem solving, placing students as protagonists, and valuing their prior knowledge<sup>17-19</sup>. Thus, pedagogical strategies are characterized as the actions that the teacher will use in their teaching, with a view to the student's learning; in short, it is about how the teacher will organize their classes based on the content, the students' difficulties, and the actions necessary to adjust activities towards raising the complexity. In addition, the teacher must systematize the content, always adjusting their strategies and mediating the levels of complexity<sup>2,20,21</sup>. In light of the foregoing, the objective of this study is to identify the teaching strategies of Physical Education teachers to address the fights content in the school context.

## Methods

### *Study characterization*

This study is characterized as a descriptive investigation, with a qualitative approach to the collected data. For it to be conducted, authorization was issued by the Regional Coordination of Greater Florianópolis, as well as by the Ethics Committee on Research with Human Beings of the Santa Catarina State University, being approved under opinion No. 2.380.744/2017.

### *Participants*

A total of 77 Physical Education teachers from basic education state schools participated in the investigation; they belonged to the Regional Coordination of Greater Florianópolis, being 48 females and 29 males, all with Physical Education degrees. Forty-eight teachers completed their *lato sensu* postgraduate course, and six completed their *stricto sensu* postgraduate course at the master's level. As for teaching time, based on the professional development cycles<sup>22</sup>, 16 teachers had 1 to 4 years, 18 had 5 to 9 years, 32 had 10 to 19 years, 8 had 20 to 27 years, and 3 teachers had been working 28 to 38 years.

### *Procedures*

As a data collection instrument, the Fight and Game Teaching Questionnaire [*Questionário de Ensino das Lutas e do Jogo*] (QELJ) was used; it was validated in accordance with the guidelines of Cassepp-Borges, Balbinotti and Teodoro<sup>23</sup>, which aim to determine the level of adequacy to the study through three levels, namely: clarity of language (terms and language used to define each question), practical relevance (whether the question has importance for what the instrument proposes to assess), and theoretical relevance (refers to the association between the question and the proposed theory). For evaluation at each of the levels, five expert evaluators in the fights and school Physical Education fields were selected.

Afterwards, each evaluator assigned a value on a scale of one to five (1 - Barely, 2 - A little, 3 - Medium, 4 - Much, 5 - Very much), for each level, in each one of the questions.

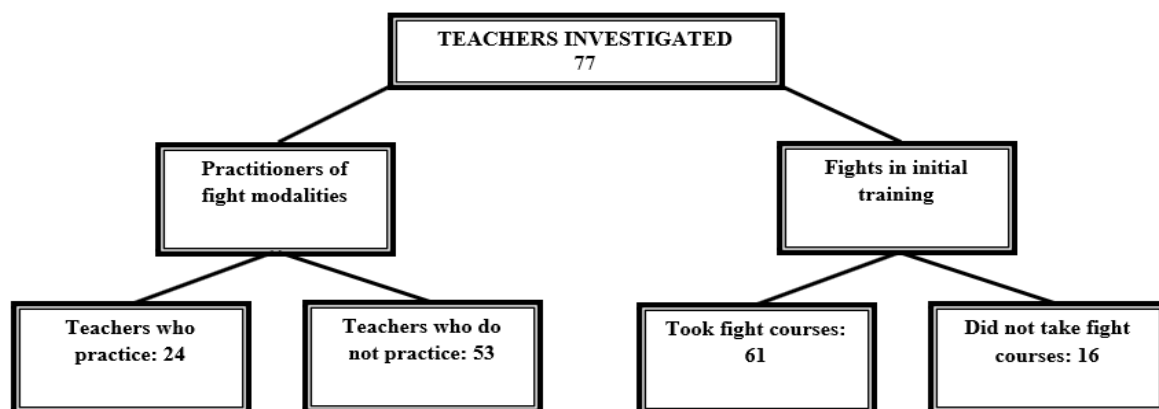
After the evaluators returned the instrument, the reliability process for each question was started through the scores obtained. This calculation complied with the following criteria: calculation of the mean of the scores assigned to each of the questions, which were divided using the three levels; and calculation of the reliability coefficient of the questions, called Aiken's V, at each of the levels, with the aid of the software Visual Basic 6<sup>24</sup>. Aiken's V coefficient is a technique used to quantify the validity and/or relevance of the levels in relation to the scores assigned by the number of evaluators<sup>25</sup>. The cutoff point was set at 0.80. With the validation process finished, the instrument obtained a reliability coefficient of 0.91, which is acceptable for its applicability.

### Data analysis

The data analysis procedure was carried out through the guidelines proposed by Bardin<sup>26</sup>, with the participants' responses being subjected to the content analysis process. Then, the answers were stored in the software NVivo 9.2, assisting in the three phases of analysis: pre-analysis (when the answers were read), encoding (which listed units of record based on the research topic), and categorization (subdivided into: approach to the fights content, pedagogical competence of teachers, fight-related courses taken in college, fight practices, and pedagogical strategies).

## Results

A piece of data deemed relevant and pointed out in the literature on the teaching of fights at school refers to the connection of the teacher with the knowledge acquired in their initial training, as well as with their current or prior practice of a fight modality. Thus, analyzing the 77 Physical Education teachers (Figure 1), 16 said that, in their initial training, they did not take any course that included the fights content, while 61 teachers claimed to have taken a course related to fights. Of these, 30 teachers took a judo course, 23 teachers, a fight course, six teachers, a capoeira course, and two teachers, a karate course. The fight modality practiced was highlighted by 24 Physical Education teachers, in the sense of both a prior and current practices, while 53 did not mention that.

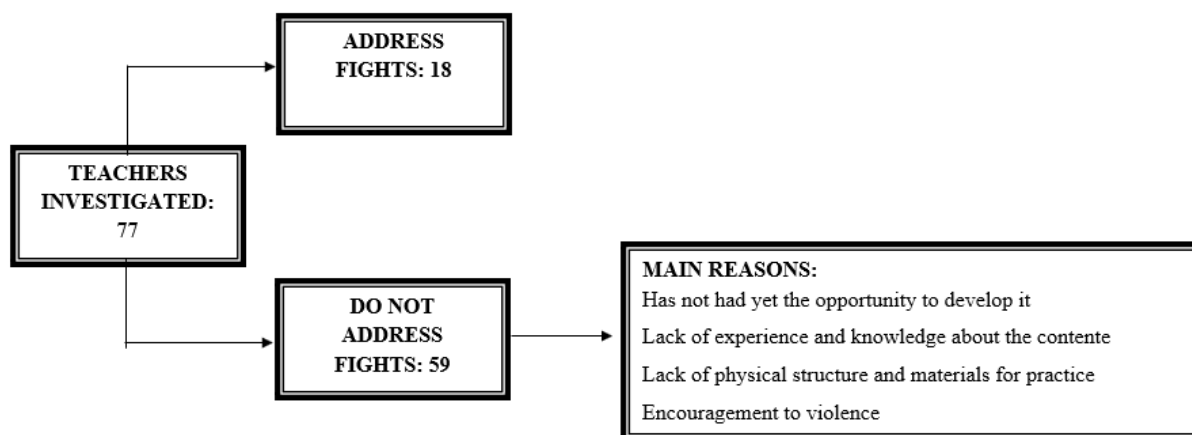


**Figure 1.** Flowchart of fight practitioners and fight-related courses in initial training

Source: The authors

Regarding the approach to fights in the scenario of state schools in the Greater Florianópolis region (Figure 2), the results show that only 18 out of the 77 teachers investigated address fights in their classes. This piece of data reveals that 59 Physical Education teachers do

not talk about fights. Figure 2 presents the main reasons.

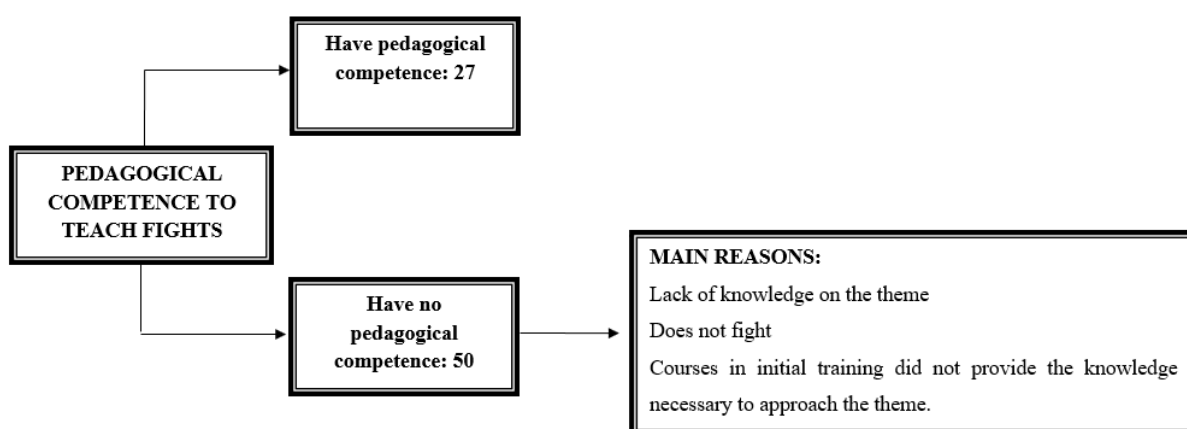


**Figure 2.** Flowchart of teachers who address fights or not, and their reasons

Source: The authors

Competence to teach about fight modalities at school was questioned to the teachers in the sense of understanding their knowledge, actions and skills for teaching. Thus, when reporting the pedagogical competence to approach the content in their Physical Education classes, 27 teachers claimed to have said competence for teaching fights at school, while 50 said they did not have it (Figure 3).

When justifying their lack of competence (lack of knowledge necessary to teach the content) to teach fights in the state schools of Greater Florianópolis, 26 teachers mentioned a lack of knowledge on the subject, nine teachers presented as reason the fact that they did not fight, and six teachers claimed that the courses in initial training do not provide the knowledge necessary for them to approach the theme at school. Thus, five teachers presented other reasons to justify their actions, which refer to knowledge and skills for teaching fights, and four teachers did not provide any explanation.



**Figure 3.** Flowchart of teachers with or without pedagogical competence to address fights, and their reasons

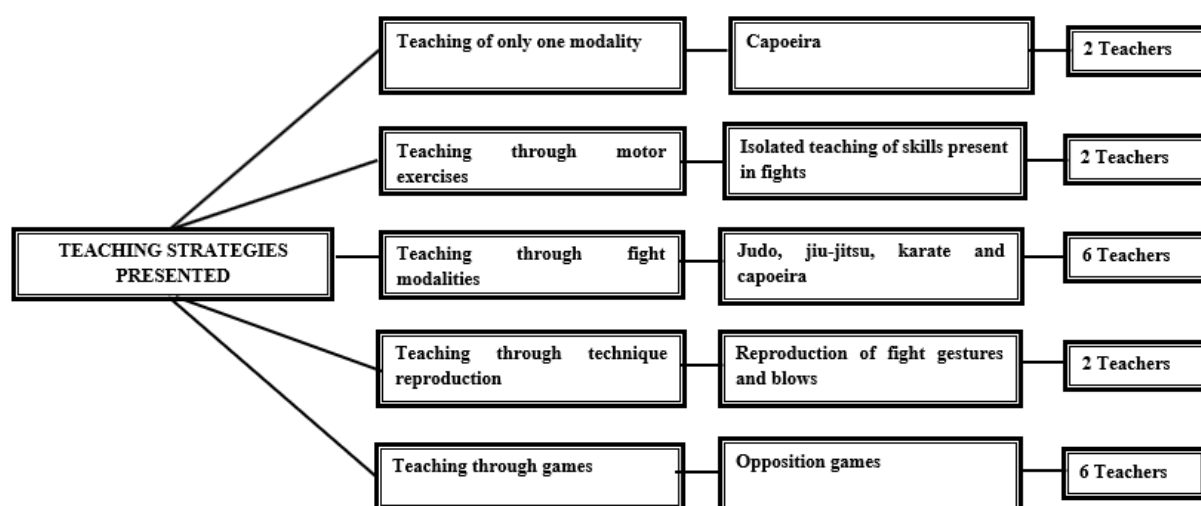
Source: The authors

With regard to the teaching of fights by the 18 teachers who address them in their Physical Education classes, and relating this to the stages of basic education, it is noteworthy that the content was approached in all stages; however, in the Youth and Adult Education teaching modality, present in state schools, the content was not mentioned. It is worth stressing

that some teachers work in more than one stage of basic education, privileging the fights content in different education periods.

Concerning teaching strategies, the analysis focused only on the 18 teachers who addressed fights in the school scenario, eight of which used to practice or currently practice some type of fight, while ten claimed never having done so. It draws attention the fact that, out of the 77 teachers participating in the research, 24 are practitioners or former practitioners, with 10 of them teaching the fights content, while 14 teachers in the practitioners group do not include the fights content in their classes.

As for the aforementioned teaching strategies, they deal with motor exercises, teaching through fight modalities, teaching centered on a single modality (capoeira), teaching centered on technical reproduction, and teaching centered on games. To better illustrate the results referring to the teaching strategies, Figure 4 presents each of the strategies mentioned.



**Figure 4.** Flowchart of teaching strategies mentioned by the teachers investigated

Source: The authors

## Discussion

The fights content is included in the curricular proposal of the state of Santa Catarina, being presented from a cultural historical and perspective, prioritizing its attitudinal conducts through reflections that permeate the sporting nature of its modalities, and encompassing violence and prejudice issues<sup>21</sup>. The National Common Curricular Base<sup>2</sup> refers to the teaching of fights as a thematic unit of the bodily culture of human movement, which should be addressed in a broad and systematized manner by teachers, who should then present pedagogical strategies capable of meeting their range of contents.

Notably, the literature points out the teachers' dilemma regarding the teaching of fights in initial training, a fact highlighted by Trusz and Nunes<sup>6</sup>, when they report that courses related to fights in Physical Education programs are recent, being addressed after 1987; however, not all Brazilian universities have courses related to fights, martial arts or combat sports in their curricular matrices. Still regarding fight courses in initial training, Gomes and Avelar-Rosa<sup>27</sup> investigated 24 Brazilian higher education institutions and found that 22 universities offered some fight-related course in their curricular matrices; the authors state that the teaching of fights is related to the context of human movement, generating interest from universities in addressing the theme, they say.

Even though the vast majority of the individuals investigated have taken some fight-related course in their initial training (61 teachers), there is a clear restriction to one type of fight (judo = 30 teachers, capoeira = 6 teachers, karate = 2 teachers), in which case judo predominates. In an international study, judo courses were also prevalent in Spanish higher education institutions, which can be explained by judo being a safer fight to be taught to students at school, hence its relevance in universities<sup>27</sup>.

The predominance of courses in initial training, centered on only one type of fight, can be an obstacle for the teacher to use the knowledge they acquired during the course, because the limitation of the content, still using teaching strategies aimed at gestural reproduction, makes teaching abstract, and the educator cannot transpose the content to the reality of schools<sup>6,28,29</sup>. Likewise, studies show that a greater connection between the university and teaching practice in the school environment gives courses a pedagogical nature and enable reflections that can support teachers in their reality<sup>6,15,16</sup>; this way, they become attentive to safety to approach the content in their classes in a broad and effective manner.

When it comes to being a practitioner, it seems that the established belief that a former fighter tends to approach this content more frequently begins to be overcome: of the 18 teachers who taught fights, 10 had a history of practice. And of all 24 practitioners or former practitioners, 14 do not include fights in their Physical Education classes. Therefore, one should not necessarily be an expert in fights to address this content at school, data which diverge from a study conducted by Matos et al.<sup>12</sup>, in which part of the individuals investigated point out that to teach fights one must be a fighter.

Nationally and internationally, authors prove the existence of teachers who have never been professionals in any type of fight but are able to approach the theme with theoretical and practical foundation in their classes<sup>9,30-32</sup>. Investigations evidence that, no matter how much the teaching of fights portrays a concern about not being a practitioner, with support from the literature and the teacher's effort the content can be developed by educators who have never fought and thus provide students with new practices and meanings during classes<sup>4,33</sup>.

The collected data corroborate with the literature, as they reflect the difficulty in inserting the fights content in the school curriculum<sup>5,12,29,32</sup>. In this sense, specific actions for teaching require immediate solutions so that the content is embraced by teachers, with public policies offering ongoing training, with universities offering courses that meet the realities of schools, and with studies aiming at consistent pedagogical proposals and strategies<sup>5,9,14,16</sup>.

As for the pedagogical competence to approach the content, the teachers investigated mostly reported not having it, a fact that reflects the concern of authors, mainly when they report a lack of specialized training in undergraduate programs for the development of basic contents for students<sup>4,16,29</sup>. Thus, Rufino and Darido<sup>33</sup> point out that ongoing training can be one of the most efficient means for teachers to understand and redefine the fights content in their classes, making use of teaching materials that can support the teaching practice.

Notably, the lack of competence to approach the theme is also related to the fact that teachers mention the need to be a teacher who is an expert in fights or to have been a fighter in order to be able to address the content at school<sup>4,31,34</sup>. It is important to note that this paradigm perpetuates due to the technical aspect of fights, such as the blows and techniques that each type of fight presents. However, authors question these arguments, justifying that there are other means besides the execution of techniques for one to teach fights at school<sup>10,11,15</sup>.

About the pedagogical strategies mentioned by the 18 teachers investigated, namely motor exercises, fight modalities, single modality (capoeira), technical reproduction and teaching through games, it can be stated that there still is a gap in the literature in terms of the investigation of the pedagogical procedures that teachers adopt to teach fights in the school context. In this sense, authors who publish in this field report results that aim to assist and

support teachers in the development of their classes, and it is noticeable that, in the literature, the proposals for teaching fights mostly encompass opposition games<sup>7,11,13,35</sup>.

Concerning a teaching strategy centered on only one modality, capoeira, in this case, it is important to stress that they mentioned using this strategy because they play capoeira. The importance of diversification in teaching fights at school is made evident when authors argue that the restricted teaching of a fight modality limits the range of content that can be addressed during classes; in short, fights comprise a wide cultural range based on the diversity of their manifestations, in the attitudinal, conceptual and procedural spheres<sup>10,11,16,29,35</sup>.

Similar to the limitation of content by means of only one fight modality, the motor exercises mentioned by the teachers investigated also present restrictions, since the execution and appropriation of blows through exercises do not correspond to fight situations, which, in this case, is ruled by opposition, confrontation between two or more opponents with attack and defense<sup>36</sup>. The authors Rufino and Darido<sup>15</sup> argue that the content must go beyond a simple appropriation of gestures and prioritize their expansion, that is, explore the diversity of fights.

Another factor that can be identified in the study, when it comes to teaching strategies, is similar to the others, specifically about the reproduction of techniques. Studies in the field show that the pedagogical treatment of teaching fights is based on gestural reproductions, focused on motor gestures commanded by the teacher, which neglect other dimensions of the contents and oppress the student's freedom of expression and creativity<sup>10,15</sup>.

In this sense, the reproduction of techniques as a strategy for teaching fights, like the others presented earlier, can be considered limited; it is worth stressing the importance of confrontation between students, fight situations that explore their motor repertoire, stimulating creativity and autonomy so that they can try to solve the situations established. Limiting class practice to gestural reproduction, with technical and isolated fundamentals, does not represent the diversity mentioned that the content can present to the student<sup>10</sup>.

Ordinary modalities were highlighted by the teachers as a teaching strategy, specifically judo, jiu-jitsu, karate and capoeira. It is relevant to point out that approaching these fight modalities is still far from ideal, since teaching at school goes beyond types, and it is important to contextualize the historical, philosophical and moral scenarios, as well as the characteristics of regional, western and eastern modalities<sup>2</sup>.

In Brazil, about widespread fights, it can be mentioned that the country has a diverse culture when it comes to fights, with its cultural fights (*marajoara*, jiu-jitsu and capoeira), fights with a more sporting nature (judo, karate, boxing), Olympic fights (fencing and wrestling), and fights characterized by their historical context (kendo, kung-fu, sumo, sambo, etc.)<sup>29,37,38</sup>. Therefore, choosing to bring only certain fight modalities into the school means restricting diversity for the student; in this sense, bold and innovative strategies that can encompass the most varied types of fights, which culturally are the identity of peoples and part of the bodily culture of human movement, are relevant in the school context<sup>1-3,21,29,38</sup>.

Games as a pedagogical strategy are presented by the authors as a means for breaking with the main paradigms that perpetuate the content of fights, as playing presents as characteristics and benefits factors that contribute to promoting interaction and overcoming, develop creativity and autonomy, develop motor and cognitive skills, generate freedom of expression, tension and attention, in addition to being unpredictable<sup>5,10,17,39,40</sup>.

In the end, a teaching of fights that is properly systematized with theoretical support can fill the gaps that were evidenced in the teaching strategies presented earlier, because the diversity of existing contents in fights and the problematizations are able to encompass dimensions that meet what is expected from the content of fights at school, providing a quality education. To this end, studies on pedagogical proposals and ongoing training on the theme are of paramount importance to give teachers theoretical and practical basis, thus breaking with paradigms that perpetuate the teaching of fights in school Physical Education.

## Conclusions

Analyzing the teaching strategies of Physical Education teachers to address the fights content in the school context, the focus of this study, it can be highlighted that the teachers investigated turned to five pedagogical actions that, in their daily practice, allow the development of this content, considering motor exercises, fight modalities, technique demonstration, capoeira as a specific fight modality, and games.

Thus, with the strategies presented in this study, it is notorious that few teachers address the fights content, since the results reveal the scarcity of this approach, showing how distant fights are from the school context. Consequently, Physical Education teachers need to organize their classes and try to teach the content using confrontation situations that actually occur in a fight, in this case, combat, which can be done through games.

It can be concluded that, regarding the pedagogical competence to approach the theme, there is a predominance of explanations that corroborate with teachers not being used to address fights in their classes, namely: lack of knowledge on the theme, not being a fighter, and courses in initial training not providing the knowledge necessary for them to approach the theme at school. Such implications can be overcome by means of pedagogical proposals for this type of approach, textbooks for theoretical foundation, fight-related courses in initial training that consider the school context and the diversity of the content, in addition to ongoing training that offers possibilities for addressing the content.

About the teaching of the content, fight modalities and a game-based teaching were the strategies most highlighted by the teachers investigated. This brings balance between the strategies that deal with motor exercises, technique demonstration and the teaching of capoeira only. Moreover, it is established that the teaching of fights through games is an appropriate means, making the content of fights applicable in its entirety by any teacher who understands the game, towards systematizing the range of content possibilities that fights may offer.

Looking at the scenario of schools belonging to the Regional Coordination of Greater Florianópolis, specifically those that were investigated, there is a need for further investigations that address, more broadly, the pedagogical proposal of the state of Santa Catarina aimed at teaching the fights content, the pedagogical projects of each education unit, and the teaching plan of Physical Education teachers in order to verify the time and space for the teaching of fights in this scenario, in addition to their assessments.

In a way, a more in-depth study with teachers from other regions of Santa Catarina can bring new perspectives and modalities to be addressed, with a view to considering the regionality and the diversity of the content. Finally, the fights content is available to teachers, and it is up to the latter to break with paradigms and common arguments, creating appropriate strategies that enrich the motor and cognitive repertoire of their students.

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