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Obstacles for physical education teachers in public schools: an unsustainable situation

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Abstract — The study aimed to identify difficulties and aspirations of physical education teachers at public schools in Niterói, inspired by UNESCO's quality physical education goal. An action research containing quantitative and qualitative data was conducted. Thirty-five physical education teachers completed a questionnaire and seven teachers were interviewed. The results indicated that the major difficulties faced were low wages, precarious infrastructure and lack of materials. Physical education is devalued, the space allocated is inadequate, and it is treated as mere recreation. Teachers criticized the lack of commitment of some colleagues who work without planning. They also complained about undisciplined students and lack of interest from their families. They aspire to self-improvement, infrastructure improvements, and more support from school and families. Teachers who do not educate and lack of support from school and government are an unsustainable reality. A synergy of efforts should be implemented, based on a systems view.

Keywords: recreation, sport, teaching, school management

Introduction

Education is related to the vision of society that we have and the one we would like to create; children and young people go to school to be educated in order to become critical-constructive and participative citizens in their society. On one hand, it is necessary for children and young people to adapt to society; on the other hand, it is also important that new generations are able to transform the world in which they live. Education is thus linked to a real current society and also to the perspective of a future better society.

We live in a world full of serious and complex problems at local and global levels. The United Nations (UN) highlights issues in society, presenting visions of a better world and promoting actions to achieve these. Many people think that sport and physical education (PE) can contribute little to extreme situations. However, the UN advocates the opposite. In 2003, for instance, it launched a task force between its agencies to use sport and PE in a more systematic manner in activities related to development and peace¹. In 2005, the UN promoted the International Year of Sport and Physical Education, noting that in many countries, sports and PE face marginalization within education systems, despite being indispensable for physical

development, promotion of health and cultivation of necessary values for social cohesion and intercultural dialogue².

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) led the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, from 2005 until 2014, which had links with other international initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals, the Education for All Movement and the Decade of the United Nations Literacy. These are all tuned to ideas of quality of life, realization of human rights and investing in the quality of basic education³.

In 2015, UNESCO affirmed that the offering of physical education is declining all over the world, which increases the concern regarding public health and reinforces the importance of governments taking political measures to guarantee that PE is taught in schools' curricula. The World Health Organization (cited by UNESCO⁴) states that levels of physical inactivity are rising and are responsible for increasing risk of diseases. The Organization explains that, for many people, the opportunities to do sport and exercise are not easily available, which makes it even more important to value PE in schools. Considering this situation, UNESCO⁴ recommends political measures to provide Quality Physical Education (QPE), which is defined according to the Association for Physical Education as:

[...] planned, progressive, inclusive learning experience that forms part of the curriculum in early years, primary and secondary education. In this respect, QPE acts as the foundation for a lifelong engagement in physical activity and sport. The learning experience offered to children and young people through physical education lessons should be developmentally appropriate to help them acquire the psychomotor skills, cognitive understanding, and social and emotional skills they need to lead a physically active life⁴.

Therefore, to reach QPE goals, UNESCO recommends policy actions to improve learning environments regarding adequate infrastructure, teacher education, curriculum flexibility, community partnerships and monitoring and quality assurance. Public policies must ensure financial commitments to provide suitable spaces, facilities and equipment, as well as didactical resources to foster students' learning⁴. Adequate infrastructure in Brazil is perhaps one of the greatest challenges ahead. Neto, Jesus, Karino, and Andrade⁵ state that 15.5 percent of private and public Brazilian schools had appropriate and modern structures; 40 percent of them had basic infrastructure; and 44.5 percent had minimum infrastructure that consists of only water, sewer, toilet, electricity and kitchen. In the context of precarious infrastructure, PE in schools has struggled over the years as it depends on a variety of indoor and outdoor spaces. Gaspari et al.⁶ demonstrated that a common difficulty faced by PE teachers in Brazil was related to lack of appropriate space and didactical resources.

Integrated with improvements in infrastructure, continuing teacher education is essential for success. UNESCO⁴ explains that children's learning is highly dependent on the effectiveness of teachers. Therefore, authorities must provide ongoing continuous professional development for teachers to strengthen their knowledge base and inclusive practice. Teachers need to be qualified in order to implement a well-balanced PE curriculum that contributes to a cross-curricular learning, is innovative and enables all students to improve their diverse skills and develop positive lifelong health habits.

Although PE in schools is essential and a starting point to foster lifelong participation in physical activity, it has limited curriculum time allocation and thus is not able to meet all the needs of children. Consequently, to provide ample opportunities for children, it is vital to build strategic partnerships between schools and community organizations⁴.

QPE programs should have monitoring and quality assurance clear systems undertaken with objectivity to supervise and support teachers. Monitoring should reveal strengths and weaknesses with the purpose of recommending better actions and improvements⁴. Schools are not composed only by students and teachers, but also by managers, supervisors, advisors and parents, who work collectively to achieve better outcomes⁷. The optimum arrangement of these stakeholders with schools' facilities and daily work processes constitute what has been called quality management in education, based on a systems view.

The education system is seen as a constituent of subsystems and processes, comprising the inputs, processes and outputs; the inputs include factors relating to the students, teachers, administrative staff, physical facilities and infrastructure, the processes include activities of teaching, learning, administration, and the

outputs include examination results, employment, earnings and satisfaction. The different parts in a system must work together to produce a synergistic effect culminating in customer and stakeholder satisfaction⁸.

The first author of this article, coordinator of a research group that looks at relationships between PE and sustainable development, has been interested in UN concepts since the International Year of Sport and Physical Education 2005. Subsequently, in 2007 and 2008, in line with the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, led by UNESCO, the research group conducted a study that aimed to investigate how PE professionals thought they should collaborate for sustainable development. The results of that research in Niterói, Brazil, pointed out some possibilities and difficulties to use sport and PE as sustainable development tools in public schools. The possibilities included work values and rules, walking in the neighborhood, playing with scrap materials, use of alternative materials, cooperative games, adapted sports, dance and gymkhana exploring environmental issues, and the knowledge that PE can work in a diverse range of topics. The difficulties referred to national historical issues, such as the lack of materials and infrastructure, the devaluation of PE teachers, and the students' resistance to a PE able to overcome the culture of being just a physical activity practice⁹.

The issue of sustainable development can show different contours when one relates it with the education scenario. It may have a more specific meaning within the school when dealing with cross-cutting themes, or gain a broader meaning when it takes into account what people really want to address: problems related to situations that become unsustainable, such as lack of material resources, precarious school management, teacher disengagement and violence.

In 2011 and 2012, another investigation was conducted, continuing the abovementioned partnership, deepening the historical issues as they represent old knots which must be loosened so that more specific issues can be worked out. The results presented in this article are related to this period and to identifying the difficulties and aspirations of PE teachers in regards to the QPE goal.

Methods

This study was inspired by an action research approach, which utilizes intersecting notions of complexity, sensitive listening, collective researcher, evaluation, negotiation and change, moving from research to action and vice versa¹⁰. For Thiollent¹¹, the main technique of action research is seminar, in which problems are examined and decisions are taken; data collection is through various procedures that include questionnaires, interviews, and observations. A mixed method was also used, which contains elements of quantitative and qualitative approaches¹².

Together with the coordinator of PE teachers of public schools in Niterói and the PE teachers, the process of action research in cycles had the purpose of contributing to continuing education. The action research approach was not fully successful because measurable change was not accomplished and teachers' involvement was lower than the researchers' expectations. However,

research was collectively produced, which blended theory with action through dialogue and negotiation. In the first cycle, the university group and the PE coordinator of the public schools decided to apply a questionnaire with teachers, create a blog to discuss several themes, and invite potential authors regarding writing a book intended for PE teachers. The research process was able to produce a seminar and generate a book on PE, published in 2013¹³.

The research was approved by the Salgado de Oliveira University's Ethical Committee that participates in the Brazilian National Commission for Ethics in Research and had the support of FAPERJ, a local institution that provides grants to research in Rio de Janeiro. After approval by the University Ethical Committee, 35 PE teachers, who participated in the meeting convened by the PE coordinator, completed the questionnaire. The questionnaires were completed by PE teachers (elementary and middle school) who agreed to participate in the research and therefore signed a consent form. The questionnaire referred to the difficulties faced by PE teachers and also gave them space to suggest improvements in teaching practice.

The second cycle consisted in visiting schools to interview seven PE teachers. One of the main objectives of this part was to understand their standpoints. An interview guide was chosen which, according to Patton¹⁴, involves building a list of predetermined questions to be explored during the interview. This list serves to help the interviewer to keep the focus on predetermined topics, but with freedom to add several questions to elucidate the answers. Questions were constructed to investigate behavior/experience and opinion/values, inspired by Patton's ideas. Other types of questions used were hypothetical, devil's advocate and ideal position, as described by Merriam¹⁵.

Peer examination method was the trustworthiness strategy employed^{15,16} that exists when a colleague, who usually has

knowledge of research, works as a devil's advocate, reviewing the data and the conclusions, questioning them. This procedure was used to enhance the questionnaire and interview guide as well as interpret data and discussion. With peer examination, the researchers were able to verify if their findings were correct or if rectification was needed.

The corpus material of the research consisted in the answered questionnaires and the interview transcripts that were analyzed separately. The questionnaires were analyzed first, quantitatively, using MS Excel software. The interview transcripts were analyzed as guided by qualitative content analysis '[...] defined as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns.'¹⁷ A conventional approach was utilized that, according to Hsieh and Shannon¹⁷, allows categories to emerge from the data, directly from the respondents' perspectives '[...] without imposing preconceived categories or theoretical perspectives' (p. 1279). The interviews were compared to find similarities and differences among the answers of respondents, sorting out the most significant ideas in a process of constant comparison¹⁸. This process involved the research team that, together, identified sub-categories and interpreted them.

Results and discussion

The main problems that teachers usually face in the school system studied were low salary, lack of materials and poor infrastructure, as cited in Figure 1. Low salary seems to be related to other issues, such as the need for extended working hours and insufficient training.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development¹⁹, which reports on the educational systems of 34 countries

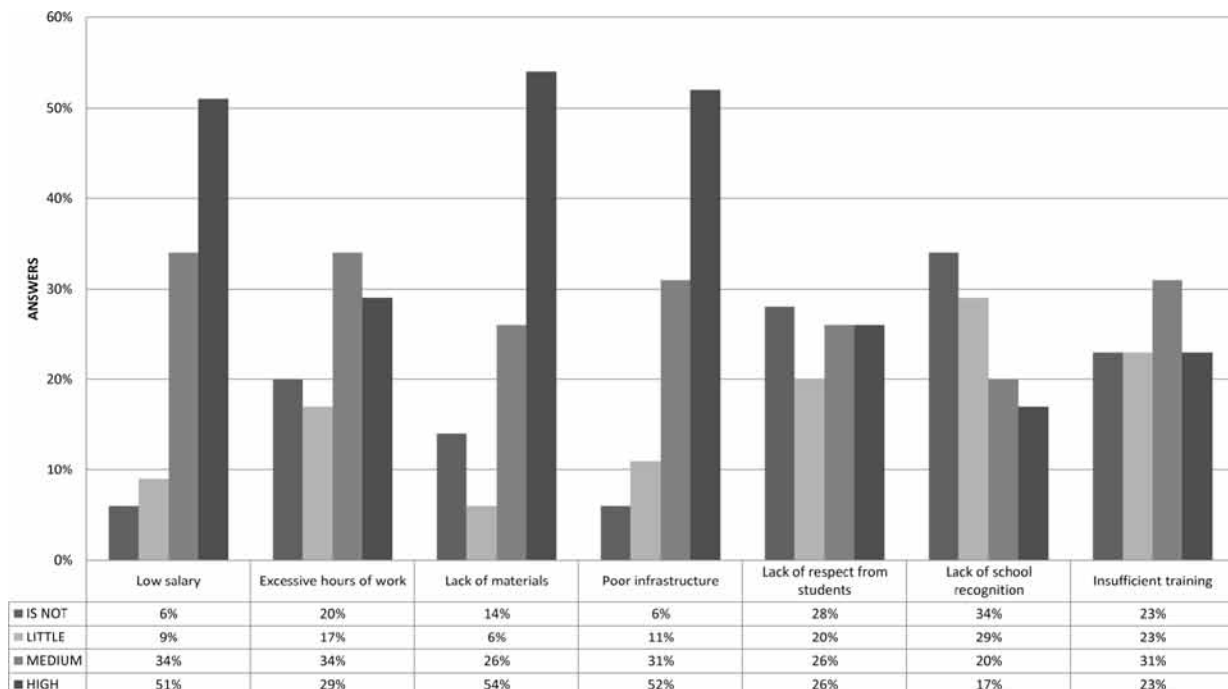


Figure 1. This figure shows the difficulties faced by physical education teachers in public schools in Niterói

around the world, provided some important data about Brazil. On the one hand, Brazil has increased investment in education compared to other countries; but on the other hand, the salaries of Brazilian teachers are below the average paid by other countries and student numbers per class are higher.

In regards to low wages paid to teachers in Brazil, Barbosa²⁰ produced a documentary and bibliographic research identifying several implications: a) teaching as a profession becomes unattractive and therefore recruitment and teacher retention is difficult; b) teachers have no purchasing power, thus not having enough money to pay living costs and invest in continuing education; c) teachers start taking additional jobs, making their working hours too long, which causes illness and decreases the quality of their work.

The author concludes that although there are other factors that affect the quality of teachers' work, such as school conditions and the large number of students, 'impoverished teachers, [...] unhappy, tired, with few opportunities for professional development, with no time for leisure and rest, hardly will be able to carry out their work satisfactorily'²⁰. Although increasing teachers' salary will not solve all problems, the author argues that without good salaries, it will be pretty difficult to improve quality of education.

Although lack of respect from students and lack of recognition were not considered to be huge difficulties, as cited in Figure 1, teachers reported that these aspects bother them, a situation that will be discussed later in this paper. Teachers were also asked about some of their suggestions in order to improve PE, and their responses are summarized in Figure 2.

One of the greatest wishes listed by teachers refers to the incentive for refresher courses. Comparing the first with the second

graph in Figure 2, it is interesting to note that although insufficient training has not been considered one of the most relevant problems, there is a great desire from teachers to participate in training courses. Teachers seem willing to improve their teaching of PE and have a desire for self-improvement. In this regard, UNESCO⁴ recommends that regular continuing professional development actions for quality PE is a priority policy. Other suggestions synthesized by Figure 2—infrastructure improvements, salary increase and purchase of equipment—are in line with the difficulties presented in Figure 1.

After the questionnaires, the interviews deepened the comprehension of difficulties related to PE working conditions, and added discussion points about improvement of uncommitted teachers and undisciplined students.

Working conditions

With regard to the spaces for PE, it is possible to identify differences between schools. While some schools have covered spaces of suitable dimensions for physical practice, in other schools the reality can be very different. The criticism expressed by Teacher 1, for example, refers to the size of a playground that is insufficient. Teacher 5 points out that some of his students complain of headaches, mainly triggered by exposure to the sun, as the playground has no coverage or adequate conditions for PE. These two cases are related to inadequate working conditions.

Another problem is the lack of demarcation of the area reserved for PE. Some schools have only one area for PE and

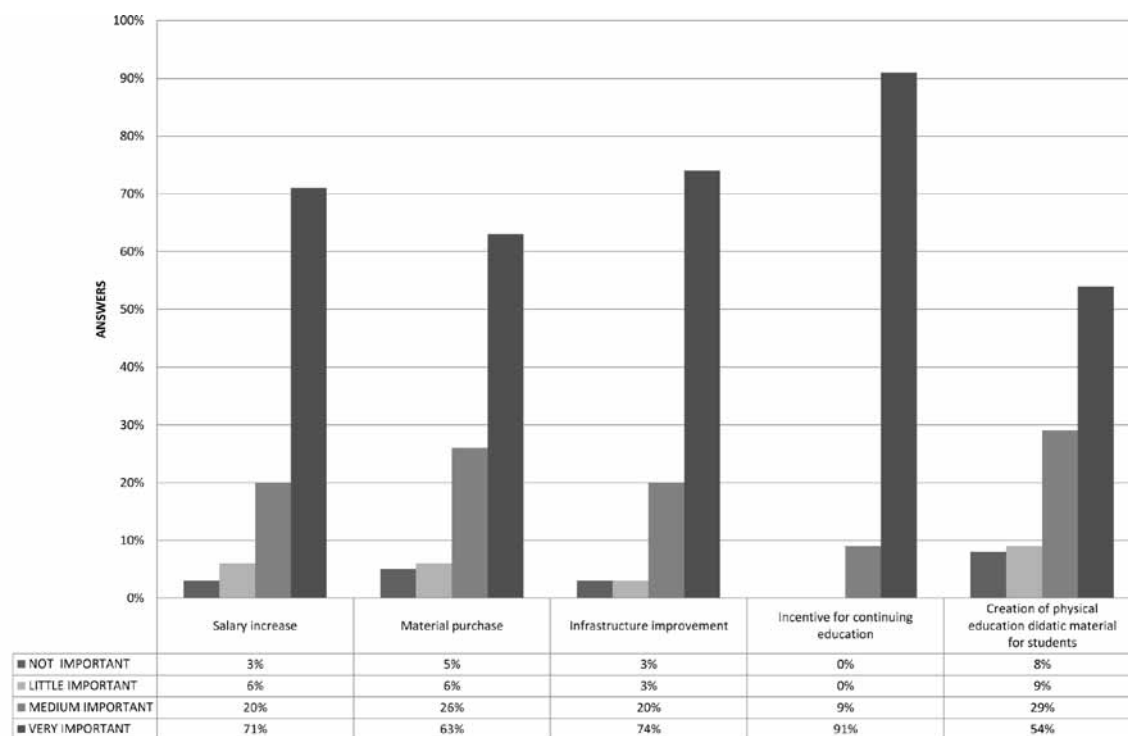


Figure 2. This figure shows suggestions of physical education teachers on how to improve their working conditions at public schools in Niterói

students' recess. Therefore, in such cases, classes must share the same space and time with students from other grades in their recess. This situation makes the development of PE classes extremely difficult and reveals depreciation related to the professional performance of the PE teacher within the school's setting.

One of the teachers interviewed who works in a school that has no separate space for PE asks how it is possible to teach in such circumstances, as sometimes his class is invaded by children from other classes. Uncomfortable with this situation, peculiar only to PE class, he says that this kind of thing does not happen with the rest of the teachers. Contrary to what happens in PE classes, nobody will open the door of a classroom and let 200 children enter. He says:

I was talking with them [the students] last week and a kid fell on top of me, [...] in the middle of the court, when everybody was concentrating. You cannot teach, you get to class and then you cannot continue [...] one child comes to fight with another who is in your class, mess with them, one child comes and throws food on the floor and you are there giving lessons [...] There is no other place to have recreation, there's no other place? They will then come into my class? Why they do not go into another room? All the time there is someone to disturb you. In Math and Portuguese class they do not go in [...] In PE they come in, why? Because they do not value it, because it is recreation for them, then whatever, it bothers me a lot [...] No one teaches this way, only the PE teacher [...] has to believe what? I have no value, so what am I doing there? If you have 200 students for them, PE for them is the same, it will not make any difference to my class, [for them] my class has no content, so that's what I believe. Nobody opens the door of a class and sends in the children on recess, because that is impossible [...], but PE can work [that way]?!

His criticisms highlight not only a difficult routine, but also the context in which PE is devalued, and in this sense, exposes the negative reality faced by PE teachers. His testimony reinforces the idea that PE is still not recognized as an essential component of the school experience. In a certain way, this non-recognition means that although it is necessary, PE is not sufficiently relevant compared to others school subjects.

This current situation characterizes the known status of PE as a marginalized subject in the school setting in many countries. For example, PE in primary schools in the United Kingdom context is not as important as other core subjects such as Math and English²¹. Rink²² explains that PE has historically been marginalized in the education system in the United States, which means that it is not valued in the same way as other core subjects. In his assessment, even art and music, other non-core subjects, have more political support than PE. However, Dyson²³ believes that PE is now gaining more attention from wider society because of the high levels of overweight children in America.

Regarding devaluation of PE, Teacher 6 commented that PE is often seen as a subject that has no significant content. For him, when there are no classes or the students have nothing to do, the PE teacher usually is instructed to deal with this situation. This kind of reality is also part of Teacher 7's routine, who said that if a teacher does not turn up for work then the school often places the students in PE classes. For these reasons, he explains

that PE should be seen as a subject that is not an appendix or a complement for other subjects.

From the teachers' reports, the main complaints relate to three aspects: 1) the space for PE is seen not as a classroom but as a free area, where all students can enter any time they want; 2) the lack of overhead coverage of the space, which exposes teachers and students to weather conditions; 3) PE is treated as a supporting subject in schools. All these aspects highlighted by the respondents reflect and reinforces the PE devaluation scenario in schools.

According to research from Santini and Neto²⁴, the lack of overhead coverage of the playground is one of the stressors commonly related by PE teachers, many of whom claim to suffer from complications in the vocal cords, headaches and sinusitis due to this working condition. One of the teachers interviewed, who teaches during the morning, described that she starts working very early in the cold morning and by the end of the morning she has the sun on her head. The reports cited by Santini and Neto²⁴ reveal problems related to school administration. In the researchers' view, teachers must ask for better working conditions, but the schools must also provide immediately at least minimum working conditions that better organize the times and spaces for PE.

For a QPE, administrators must provide adequate resources that include accessible and safe facilities, equipment and materials; in other words, students and teachers need a well-managed environment for teaching and learning⁴. For example, optimum conditions include that all courts are covered, but minimum conditions include: a) when PE is conducted in open courts, the school should allocate periods of the day that avoid extreme sun exposure; b) defining spaces for PE so that there is no interference from other children or adults; c) valuing and respecting PE as a subject, and not asking its teacher to cover the absence of other teachers, a situation that is rarely applied to teachers of other subjects.

The standard of quality comes from what the researchers observed in the research and in their professional experience; working conditions considered optimal or minimal vary according to the context. Today, what is considered great may become the minimum standard in another reality or time. According to UNESCO⁴, QPE will not look the same in all places around the world, as quality will have different meanings in different national settings and educational contexts.

Working without content by some teachers

The teachers interviewed were critical about the work without content developed by some colleagues. Teacher 1 states that there are some who work without any kind of educational planning, focusing their classes on a few sports, such as soccer or handball. Children usually take this practice as a reference. Because of that, when a teacher wants to do their job well, some students have difficulties.

Teacher 5 reported that he asked the students what the previous teacher used to do. The answer was almost always the same; they said that the teacher just gave them balls for the boys to

play soccer and girls to play *queimado*, a kind of recreational game played in Brazil that is like prison dodgeball, played with just one ball. So he had to explain that PE class is not like that, it has other aspects. However, the students preferred the other teacher, who let them play whatever they wanted; they got used to the bad teacher. Teacher 5 also commented that the students will only realize that this teacher was not good for them when they graduate, as he did.

Regarding any teacher who do not develop content, Teacher 6 called him or her an 'accommodated teacher', who just throws the ball and let the kids do what they want. For Teacher 6, PE, like any subject, has content and values that must be worked out, and failure to take responsibility for education of students upsets him. This uncompromising and accommodated teacher devalues PE within the school context.

The teacher that 'rolls the ball' or 'gives the ball' is not new, criticisms have already been made in this direction. Silva and Bracht²⁵ explain that there are three main PE pedagogical practices in Brazilian schools, one is concerned with teaching sport competences based on a high performance model, a second is characterized as the 'teacher who rolls the ball' or 'shadow pedagogy', and a third would be called innovative. In the second, the teacher is not investing in pedagogy, he is reduced to an administrator of didactical material and has a posture of a recreationist, or a teacher of a class that will compensate boredom produced in other subjects.

For Darido²⁶, when a teacher assumes a recreationist position, he is disregarding procedures and failing to intervene and mediate knowledge. Although she criticizes this kind of teacher, she explains that there are other factors that must be taken into account. For her, firstly, in PE 'what not to do' has been discussed theoretically, but these theories have not been accompanied by 'what to do', leaving an empty space for the teachers in their practice. Another factor relates to the lack of public policies that would facilitate teachers' work: working conditions, space, suitable material, wage policies, and especially support for continuing education. This scenario, in Darido's view, seems to be contributing to a stressful situation that has been debated in academic literature. In this sense, the study by Santini and Neto²⁴ draws attention to the perception of the PE teacher as a 'ball teacher'. The authors state that this behavior may be consequence of a burnout syndrome that teachers are going through, which results from a number of factors that have been accumulated for years such as the lack of administrative support, the demand on the teacher to pursue multiple roles, the anxiety about the inadequacy of the training received at university to meet the challenges of reality in public schools, weak interpersonal relationships at school, and living in an environment of violence.

Many teachers are really going through a burnout syndrome. However, the researchers have witnessed new teachers who already fit the 'ball teacher' profile, which may be a result of inadequate training and/or a non-commitment to the teaching profession. The reality is very difficult and it is necessary to demand better working conditions, but PE teachers also have to engage, building their practice in co-authorship with students, conscious of their role as educators.

Teachers' intentions, combined with good strategies in relation to PE content, are essential to their duty with children and young people. Teachers are of great importance to students' education; their influence is not easy to measure. Their gestures, attitudes and words can go a long way in the life of each person.

Aspiration to improve uncommitted teachers' work

Regarding the work of PE teachers, Teacher 1 thinks there should be an inspection of the teachers who are not doing their job properly in accordance with the schools' system proposal. Compared to other classrooms teachers, he comments that PE teachers 'are free to teach what they want to teach'. Therefore, for him, PE teachers need to be monitored.

Considering the already mentioned situation of poor school management and lack of adequate materials and infrastructure, the view of monitoring PE teachers seems too hierarchical. According to Silva⁷, nowadays the school supervision is not so hierarchical, exerting a power relation over the teachers, but this should instead be undertaken by educators who work together with teachers, in a partnership effort for optimum results in the school teaching and learning environment.

The researchers agree that supervision needs to become better so as to overcome this behavior of doing whatever one desires, without a commitment to a substantial collective proposal. It is essential to build a better partnership between teachers and school management, in order to promote a dialogue where the teacher receives more attention, support, and therefore is able to better teach and facilitate students' learning.

Teacher 5 states that as some PE teachers are doing a poor job, there should be more fixed guidelines, obliging teachers to follow certain lesson content for a few terms, until the situation improves and then this could be more flexible. In his opinion, this obligation to work with certain lesson content would be difficult because of lack of materials and infrastructure, but then those problems could be more easily understood.

Although there are institutional curriculum guidelines, further monitoring and a clearer systematization of what should be taught in the classroom are still needed. However, we do not agree with rigid guidelines because as UNESCO⁴ points out, curricula must be flexible and adaptable so that teachers are empowered to offer interesting activities to students.

Teacher 3 agrees that there is not enough supervision in relation to PE teachers, and adds that teachers end up teaching what they have higher affinity for. She also admits not teaching very much basketball because she is not good at it; instead, she teaches volleyball, handball and soccer.

The idea that PE teachers must have full motor skills for teaching physical activities contents is misguided thinking because there are several strategies that can be taught. It also contributes to a practice of many teachers who are teaching lesson contents centered on their limitations and not on students' needs and interests.

Penney, Brooker, Hay and Gillespie²⁷ consider that there is not an absolute definition of QPE, which needs to be contextualized in social, cultural and institutional terms; they propose

three inter-related dimensions of QPE: curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. One issue that is treated across those dimensions is, for example, the importance of having the students at the center.

This focus on the student, in our opinion, is of paramount importance in all subjects and diverse realities. For example, Patton and Parker²⁸ affirm that success in professional development of PE teachers is a process in which acquisition of knowledge is a starting point, then as teachers start viewing themselves as learners, self-improvement and empowerment is a consequence, and in this process there is a 'shift in teacher identity to focus on student learning, not themselves'²⁸.

For Teacher 6, there is no separation between PE and school context; PE problems are a variant of education problems, and in that sense, what should improve is government investment, management work, and teachers' commitment. The researchers agree with this teacher that PE problems do not happen in a non-contextualized way, and therefore they cannot be treated as isolated from other issues. A quality PE curriculum cannot be an island, it may be a reality in a quality education scenario, which depends on public policies and joint effort of all stakeholders.

Undisciplined and violent students

Some teachers complained about violence and lack of discipline and collaboration of students. Teacher 5 commented that some students arrive late, some want to use mobile phones, others want to lie down, and others cannot wait and try to kick the ball when it is still in the teacher's bag. These situations disturb the classes and impair the development of significant lesson content in PE classes. This teacher added that the lack of interest of students, family and school is upsetting to him.

Indiscipline is not unique to PE classes or to the studied institution, but it is a situation experienced in many different disciplines and schools. According to Garcia²⁹, it has been a source of stress in educational interpersonal relationships between the actors of the school community, and transcends the behavioral issue, relating to the current historical context. It is expressed in different ways, is more creative than in the past, and became for teachers a difficult matter of confronting and resolving. 'The school indiscipline does not have a single cause, or even a main one. Disruptive events, even involving a single person, usually come from a number of different causes, and very commonly reflects a complex combination of causes'²⁹.

The author points ways to tackle this problem: 1) schools' investment in continuing education programs for teachers; 2) creation of more opportunities for dialogue to improve the relationship with students; 3) sharing of discipline responsibility with the students so that they participate in the problem solution; and 4) reinforcement of positive behavior.

From this explanation that undisciplined behaviors evolved and diversified on the basis of socio-cultural changes, what was considered indiscipline in the past is no longer applicable. This process is natural, ideas and behaviors change over time and the school cannot stagnate, it needs to keep up with changes in society. Dialogue and co-participation of students are valuable

in facing the problem of indiscipline. In fact, all actors of the school community should be heard. Efficient management is one that values diverse views, because everybody has a right to express opinions and participate, as well the duty to collaborate.

As it occurs with indiscipline, lack of interest seems to be the result of a combination of extrinsic and intrinsic factors. The first concerns, for example, actions and social relationships established by the school and society, and the latter relates to inner motivations and personal desires. To minimize indiscipline and lack of interest, the researchers recommend a path of more democratic coexistence, which stimulates dialogue, participation, co-responsibility, creativity, critical thinking and being in tune with current society context.

In this discussion about indiscipline and lack of interest, the issue of violence is also present. Teacher 6 is upset by violence and lack of values; he notes that students 'naturalize violence' and not see themselves as violent beings, whether verbal or physical violence.

Regarding this naturalization of violence, Silva³⁰ affirms that because people are immersed in a violent society, many of the perpetrators feel no responsibility or guilt for their actions. The author blames the capitalist society, because it overly values the materialistic side of life and power, not giving deserved importance to human beings. Violence is everywhere, on the street, at home, at school, in the media, and in the world. Although people believe that violence is far from them, it is present in various environments in which they live and within them³⁰.

Different expressions of violence are present daily in schools: interference of violent external groups such as, for example, drug dealers; school depredation that is a public property; fights between students; disagreements between teachers and students; and domestic violence³¹. The main type of violence at school is domestic, consisting of the main concern in school meetings. It has several faces: abandonment because of a guardian's absence; the lack of basic care; physical violence by adults; psychological violence, expressed by threats and yelling; and sexual abuse infringed by the adult to the child³⁰.

Considering this context, the author notes that for many teachers the act of teaching children and adolescents to live with sexual, cultural, religious, racial and economic diversity 'is a Herculean task, is martyrdom'³⁰. Santini and Neto²⁴ also address the issue of violence and the influence upon PE teachers and consider it a significant factor that increases their stress and emotional exhaustion.

So, what should be done? Give up the profession? But other professions will probably also be surrounded by violence. Silva³⁰ suggests a solution: invest in the role of the school as a promoter of good relationships, peace and friendship and emphasize that education should be closer to the reality of children's life, promoting citizenship education.

The reality of a violent life should not only be embraced by teachers and schools, but worked out with sensibility and intelligence, so that the school becomes a transformation and hope laboratory. For Freire³², an essential part of human nature needed to knowledge production is hope, which enriches interactions between teachers and students in the joyful educative

activity. In other words, more than ever teachers should develop affectionate and educative relationships with students and focus learning on the interests, singularities and well-being of children and youngsters.

Conclusions

Considering that research is an ongoing process, this research cycle served to deepen some issues. The first refers to the type of research chosen, quantitative and qualitative and characterized as action research: at times research, but at other times performing actions is important because it connects the academic environment of the university to school daily reality. The school, which serves more to practice, needs more applied research, and therefore action research seems to be an appropriate choice.

The second issue relates to material difficulties, precarious working conditions, lack of equipment, low wages and insufficient professional continuing education. These are consequences of government political measures, which is something that students, teachers and families must unite against and question, demanding change.

The third issue refers to old problems that are repeated in Brazilian PE that has to do with its value as a subject in the school context. PE teachers still feel threatened, devalued, and to surpass this they need not only assert for better working conditions but also revise their teaching practice supported by school management.

The recreational PE teacher, who 'rolls the ball' and does not educate, is a regrettable reality that has not yet been overcome in the schools studied; it is clearly an unsustainable situation that must change. The researchers agree with this view, but it is also necessary to consider the situation of stress and burnout experienced by teachers, which is a result of lack of support from the school and the government. Therefore, greater involvement of teachers in school decision-making and community participation must be encouraged, which are essential aspects to improve school participatory management.

The fourth issue, students' indiscipline, is complex; however, this problem should not be the main focus of change as it can be minimized by improving schools' infrastructure, schools' management, and teachers' training. The relationships built inside schools need to be nourished with meaningful dialogue inspired by Freire's ideas of hope and joy of the educational experience.

QPE advocated internationally by UNESCO⁴ is, in the researchers' opinion, interdependent on quality education as a whole, so future efforts in Brazil should consider a systems view. It is important to understand that PE exists in relation to other subjects, school management and government investment. A synergy of efforts must be experimented in these interconnected aspects of educational context.

As UNESCO emphasizes, PE in schools is, for the majority of people, the most important beginning to acquire a healthy active lifestyle for life. Therefore, the QPE goal is dependent of an ongoing collective work for education. Continuing education for all the professionals involved in the school, collaborative work, interdisciplinary efforts and applied researches are recommended

to foster a positive learning environment and concrete changes in daily school routine.

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