

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE WRITTEN AND TAUGHT CURRICULUM IN SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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Abstract: *This study analyzes, from an operational perspective, the way in which the school curriculum in the Physical Education discipline is implemented in practice, focusing on verifying the coherence between the official document (written curriculum) and the actual teaching process (taught curriculum). To carry out this investigation, teachers from all over the country were selected, with various teaching degrees and experience, who acted as monitors of the educational process. The main activity of the monitors consisted in the detailed analysis and evaluation of the curriculum in the physical education discipline of general education and its practical application, responding to a set of well-defined quantitative and qualitative indicators, this being considered curricular correspondence.*

Key words: *curriculum, physical education, monitoring.*

1. Introduction

More and more specialists in the field of physical education, through their research, are looking for solutions to complete and modernize the school discipline, so that it meets the requirements of contemporary education. Most of the research focuses on the theory and methodology of influencing the psychomotor capacity of students, some approaching physical education lessons from a sociological [5], philological [7] or psychological [10] perspective, and others try to integrate information and communication technologies into the educational process [12], [14].

In recent years, research on the interests and needs of students in practicing physical education classes has aroused special interest among specialists [3], [6], [11]. The analysis of the data obtained by the researchers confirms that school physical education places a predominant emphasis on the results of control tests, and the quantitative approach of physical education classes contributes to the exclusion of students from the educational process. This phenomenon generates negative effects, such as demotivation, disappointment and anxiety, especially when the evaluations are focused exclusively on competition, neglecting the qualitative dimension of

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the educational process [11, p.54]. The researchers also point out that this situation can be remedied by revising educational policies at the level of the central public administration, by reconceptualizing and adapting the National Curriculum to the current needs of students.

The curriculum, in the context of educational policies, is considered "a fundamental instrument in the formation and development of cognitive, social, affective and psychomotor competences, an instrument on which the entire organized educational process is based" [13, p.14], but at the same time "it represents the dominant dimension of educational policies, a system of curricular policies; a system of conceptual approaches; a system of documents and curricular products; a system of process" [8, p.11].

The development of the school curriculum, carried out periodically at intervals of 6–8 years, is a complex managerial activity that involves the evaluation, analysis, appreciation and measurement of the quality of curricular products by relating them to a set of criteria and indicators (including scientific rigor, relevance of objectives, relevance of contents, orientation of the training process and curricular coherence), in order to develop conceptual benchmarks for modernization and ensure an environment student-centered, inclusive, interdisciplinary and oriented towards the development of competences, according to the ideas expressed by several authors [1], [4], [9].

The monitoring of the school curriculum is a systematic and continuous evaluation process, designed to ensure the control and improvement of the quality of the

implementation of the curricular document in educational practice. Through this approach, the barriers, errors and difficulties that may arise in the application of the written curriculum are rigorously identified, which allows the critical analysis of these aspects and the proposal of corrective interventions [13, p.55-56]. Thus, monitoring not only verifies compliance with established standards, but also creates the necessary premises for constant adjustments and cyclical development of the school curriculum, ensuring permanent adaptation to the needs of students and to the development of the educational environment.

According to the authors Guţu V. and Ţurcanu C. [8], [13], the monitoring of the school curriculum is an essential process of continuous evaluation and adjustment, aiming to control and improve the quality of the application of the curricular document within the educational practice and this process involves several fundamental aspects: the correspondence between the written curriculum and the taught/implemented curriculum, the observance of the internal logic of the teaching-learning-evaluation process, capitalizing on the provisions of the designed curriculum, identifying the causes that generate barriers and difficulties in the application of the written curriculum and evaluating the impact of the curriculum on school results.

Referring to previous research, "we believe that the monitoring of the school curriculum in the discipline of physical education should be approached as a complex and logical pedagogical (curricular) research, which will highlight the vulnerable aspects of the educational process of the discipline" and will allow

"the continuous and cyclical development of the curriculum" [2, p. 56], adapted to the interests and needs of societies.

2. Materials and Methods

In order to carry out the research activity, physical education teachers from all regions of the country were selected (also representing diversity in pedagogical experience), who acted as monitors of the application of curricular concepts to the discipline but also of the realization of the educational process, being actively involved in the analysis and detailed evaluation of the curriculum in the discipline of physical education in general education.

To begin with, the teacher-monitor of the School Physical Education discipline was proposed, in a monitoring register [6, p. 59], a set of indicators that reflect the conceptual provisions of the written curriculum. For these indicators, specific criteria were formulated to be evaluated on a scale of 1 to 5, thus setting specific restrictions, visions and difficulties for each monitored aspect. At the same time, the mandatory section for Comments/ Explanations and Suggestions for Reducing Difficulties has been assigned, it represents an essential component of the survey, completing the numerical scores and providing a qualitative perspective on the way in which various aspects of the curriculum and the educational process are perceived.

3. Results and Discussions

Indicator 1. Aspects of the curricular concept on student learning and engagement (Figure 1).

- At the first criterion of this indicator, which assesses the concept of the physical education curriculum that it provides students for learning and development according to their individual pace and potential, it is observed that the responses are high (values 4–5) and indicate a positive perception, suggesting that most teachers consider that the conceptual provisions of the document ensure an environment in which students benefit from learning adapted to their level of learning. development and receive personalized learning opportunities.

- The next criterion that supports the idea that the curricular provisions of the physical education discipline provide students with personalized learning opportunities, allows each student to progress at his or her natural pace, without excessive pressures of uniformity, we observe that the teachers' answers also have high values. This indicates that the document perceives that student have the opportunity to adapt their learning pace. Some variations between the answers obtained from teachers, with lower values, can be interpreted as meaning that there are differences in the educational process between different levels of education, but also individual methodical aspects of teaching of the teacher.

- To the extent that the conceptual landmarks of the curriculum provide for the adaptation of activities and exercises to the specific needs of each student, criterion three of this indicator, it was observed that teachers opted for positive responses (high scores) indicating that the activities are considered well differentiated, contributing to a better involvement and understanding to meet the specific needs of each student.

- Another criterion of this indicator, which tracks whether the disciplinary curriculum stimulates students' interest and commitment to the educational process, here we notice that the respondents' opinions are divided. A good part of the teachers opted for high scores and give an excellent appreciation to the conceptual approach of the curriculum for motivation, suggesting that benchmarks for the formation of a stimulating educational climate are transgressed, and another part of the specialists, whose answers indicate more modest scores, highlight moments when the students' motivation to practice physical education in school can be improved including through the provisions of the curricular concept.

- For the next criterion, which reflects the flexibility of the curriculum to ensure the participation of students in the decision-

making process regarding the organization of activities or lessons, most of the respondents gave high ratings (scores of 4–5). This suggests that most teachers believe that students are actively involved in decision-making, contributing to a democratic educational environment. A small part of those surveyed believe that there are possibilities to indicate some specific situations, where the mechanisms for involving students could be better implemented.

- The last criterion of this round is about opening the curriculum to students' opinions and ideas, reflecting a learning environment where every voice is valued. High scores indicate a positive perception, with many respondents stating that the provisions of the curriculum reflect the concept that students' opinions should be listened to and valued.

The conceptual provisions of the written curriculum are Student-Centered (choose level from 1 to 5 for each criterion):



Fig. 1. Image of aspects of the curricular concept on student learning and engagement

Feedback from teachers from a contextual perspective on numerical scores highlights strengths and at the same time identifies problems and areas that need to be improved. In this regard, in order to improve the disciplinary

curriculum, the vast majority suggest that it is necessary to reintroduce the evaluation by grades in the discipline of physical education for secondary and high school education, the implementation of regular feedback mechanisms from

students to monitor and adapt teaching strategies, and last but not least, the elaboration of specific guidelines for the discipline of school physical education that reflect modern teaching methods and strategies for the application of in the context of today's education.

Indicator 2. Aspects of the curricular concept on didactic coherence (Figure 2).

- To the first criterion, which aims to follow up on whether the provisions of the physical education curriculum ensure the integration of transversal, general and specific competences in the educational process through didactic design (both long-term and short-term), respondents gave high scores (4–5), suggesting a favorable perception of the coherence between the different types of competences through learning activities. So they believe that the curriculum of the discipline is designed in such a way as to ensure a smooth transition between various skills, including contributing to the personalization of learning.

- The next criterion is oriented towards the conceptual perception of the written

curriculum through which the operational objectives of the lessons are deduced from the units of competence and ensure the coverage of different levels of knowledge, application, understanding. The answers provided generally indicate a good alignment of the objectives with the targeted competences, reflected by high scores, supporting the idea that the curricular concept ensures the possibility for lessons to be structured in such a way as to meet the needs of students at multiple cognitive and applicative levels, thus ensuring a student-centered approach. Criterion three aims to assess whether the learning activities and exercises transcribed in the curriculum document of the physical education discipline are designed to form students' competences, emphasizing the practical applicability of knowledge. The high scores obtained from most respondents suggest that the proposed activities are considered effective in developing competences and reflect a curriculum that emphasizes active and experiential learning, essential for a student-centered approach.

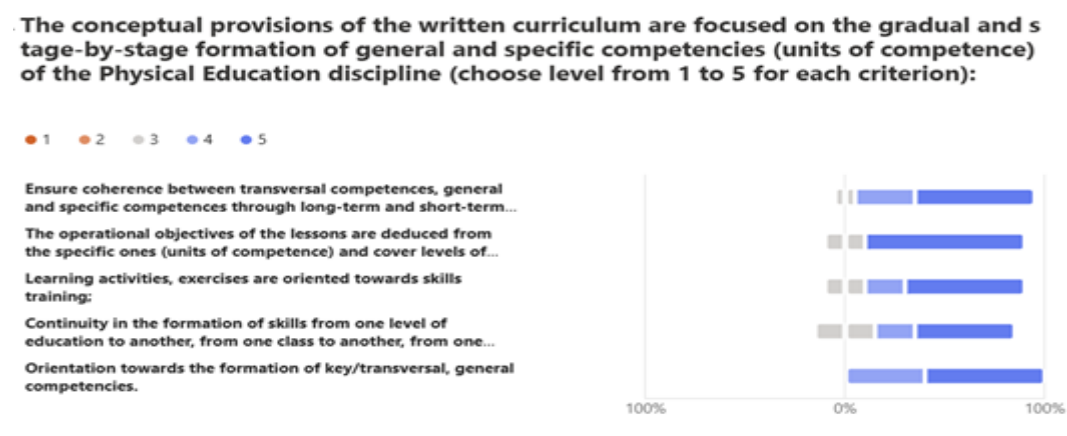


Fig. 2. *Image of aspects of the curricular concept on didactic coherence*

- The measurement of how the curriculum ensures continuous development of competences from one level of education to another, from one class to another and from one topic to another is reflected in criterion four. Positive responses (high scores) suggest that the curriculum is perceived as providing a smooth transition between different educational stages, as well as indicating good curriculum planning that facilitates a progressive and integrated development of competences.

- To the extent that the written curriculum emphasizes the development of key or transversal competences (essential for the holistic formation of the student), criterion five, all respondents gave high scores, indicating an appreciation for the inclusion and development of these competences. So they argue that the curriculum is designed not only for the transmission of knowledge, but also for the formation of essential skills and critical thinking, a central aspect in a student-centered approach.

Analyzing the specific comments, observations and suggestions of teachers regarding the difficulties or gaps identified in the implementation of competence training components in the physical education curriculum, we highlight the fact that, although there is an overall positive perception of competence integration, improvements are suggested on the way competences are linked in the short and long term (from one class to another, from one level of education to another), a review of the way in which units of competences are deduced from specific competences is recommended, in order to ensure a smooth transition between the different levels of knowledge

and application. At the same time, it is necessary to make the connection between the theory taught and the practice at a more explicit level, so that the students also perceive more clearly the evolution of the skills developed.

Indicator 3. Aspects of the curricular concept regarding the activity in the lesson and the involvement of the students (Figure 3).

- Criterion number one of indicator three aims to highlight whether the concept of the curriculum reflects, to some extent, the level of commitment and activity of students in the educational process. Teachers' responses with high scores (usually 4–5) indicate that students are perceived as being in a continuous flow of learning, benefiting from a dynamic educational atmosphere. This suggests that the learning environment provided by the curriculum is stimulating and that the transcribed teaching strategies can manage to maintain students' attention and involvement.

- In the next criterion, which aims to assess the degree of use of modern and interactive methods in the teaching process that favor active learning (learning activities transcribed in the disciplinary curriculum), most teachers gave high scores, indicating that teachers are guided to frequently use methods that stimulate collaboration and critical thinking, but also to create a dynamic and participatory learning environment. A small proportion of the participants in the questionnaire gave lower scores, suggesting that in certain situations or contexts, modern methods are not or cannot be applied consistently enough.

- The third criterion, quantitative, which requires ensuring a vision of the balance

between active and passive students, making the imaginary connection with the curricular provisions, reflects responses with a positive perception, in which most students are actively involved, and the number of passive students is reduced. Therefore, it should be noted that effective classroom management and

teaching methods stimulate active participation. Differences in score can highlight specific situations in which, perhaps due to the methodology applied or the context of the class, there is an imbalance between active and passive students.

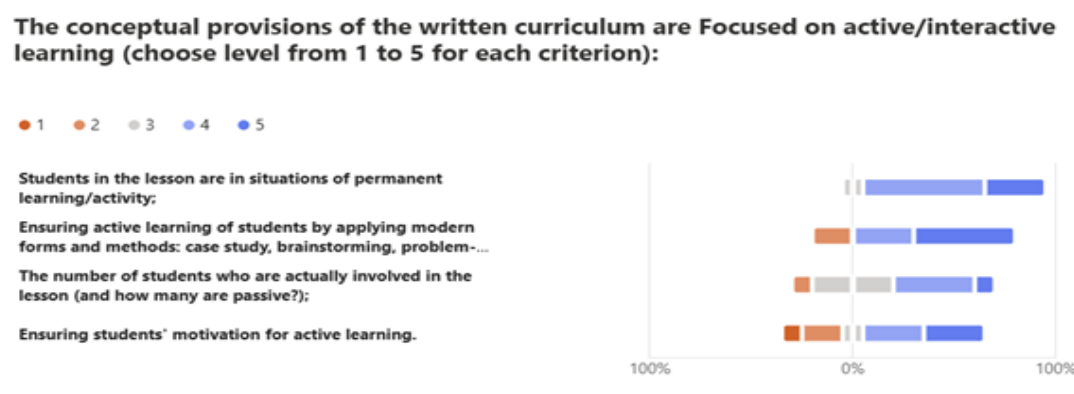


Fig. 3. Image of aspects of the curricular concept regarding the activity in the lesson and the involvement of the students

- Biased responses are reflected in the criterion that assesses the extent to which curricular provisions guide teachers towards stimulating and maintaining students' motivation (essential for active engagement and lifelong learning). The high scores provided by teachers indicate that the resources transcribed in the curricula are motivating, and the effective application of the activities stimulates the active participation of students. Lower scores provided by specialists could suggest the need to improve motivation strategies or tailor them to students' individual needs.

The comments, observations and suggestions offered by the teachers highlight some moments related to the management of the educational institution (material and human resources available) and other factors that influence the educational process, such as the

specifics of the class, the level of development of the students or the educational environment.

Indicator 4. Aspects of the curricular concept regarding the relevance of content units (Figure 4)

- The evaluation of the accessibility of the didactic content materials, which implies the ease of being understood and used by the students (both in terms of language, visual or structural presentation), is reflected by the first criterion. We notice that all the specialists involved in the evaluation provided high answers and this fact indicates that students can access and use the content effectively and there are no problems of complexity, language or presentation that limit accessibility. A positive perception of the accessibility of content units supports the idea that materials are designed to be tailored to

various levels of understanding.

- The next criterion of this indicator assesses the degree to which teaching materials are perceived as modern, relevant and interesting for students. These teachers, for the most part, opted for high scores, indicating that the materials are considered in step with educational developments and adapted to the interests of the students. A very small

number of respondents assigned lower scores, which indicates that there is a lack of updating of the contents or the fact that they fail to capture the attention of students. This predominantly positive assessment of this criterion supports the idea that teaching materials are not only informative, but also visually and thematically attractive, contributing to students' motivation.

I. The conceptual provisions of the written curriculum contain current content units for students oriented towards interdisciplinarity (choose level from 1 to 5 for each criterion):



Fig. 4. Image of aspects of the curricular concept regarding the relevance of content units

- Also here, another criterion analyzes how efficiently the teaching materials are designed to contribute to the development of the general and specific skills of the students (and not only to the transmission of information), but we also notice that the subjects' answers have high values (4 – 5). This indicates that content units are seen as tools that facilitate the formation of practical skills, critical thinking and the ability to apply knowledge. In this sense, we conclude that the content units are not only informative, but actively contribute to the formation of competences, an essential aspect in a student-centered approach.

- The last item of this indicator assesses the degree to which teaching materials link different disciplines (contributing to integrated and holistic learning). As with

the previous item, teachers gave high scores, which indicates a perception that content units are not limited to a single discipline, but promote connections between various fields, favoring critical thinking and information synthesis. This positive assessment in this area supports the development of a multidisciplinary perspective, which is essential to respond to the complexity of modern reality

In the comments/ explanations section, suggestions for mitigating difficulties, the following important aspects were highlighted: the need for content units to be updated and diversified to remain relevant and engaging is emphasized, to facilitate learning, materials can be adapted to students' level of understanding by including multimedia elements or digital resources, it is also

necessary to resize didactic planning/design that allows immediate adaptation for easy access to information, and to stimulate students' interest in the topics addressed.

Indicator 5. Aspects of the curricular concept regarding the relevance of learning assessment (Figure 5).

- For this indicator, the first criterion assesses the way in which assessment is integrated throughout the educational process, from the initial diagnosis of students' knowledge, through progress monitoring (formative assessment), to summative assessment at the end of the learning units. The answers given by most of the teachers are high (values 4–5) which indicate that the respondents, through the disciplinary curriculum, perceive an adequate evaluation process, and a small part of them, giving more modest values, indicate that the emphasis is more on the final evaluation, not sufficiently integrating the initial or formative evaluation.

- The next criterion examines whether the assessment mode in the physical education discipline reflects the process of manifestation of competences (from knowledge to application and understanding) progressively throughout the learning stages. From the results obtained, all teachers agree that the evaluation is designed to capture not only the final result, but also the evolution, and the development of students' competences with a well-implemented formative approach, which recognizes the progress from one level of education to another.

- The next criterion of the same indicator reflects the perception of the evaluation environment, emphasizing the creation of

an atmosphere in which evaluation does not generate anxiety, but stimulates students' learning and personal development. Here we notice that the teachers involved in this questionnaire, in most cases, opted for high scores. This reflects the fact that the evaluation is perceived as constructive and free from excessive pressure. However, some teachers (opting for lower scores) highlight the fact that there are still situations in which the evaluation is carried out in a way perceived as rigid or stressful. We mention that a non-stressful evaluation environment favors active participation and better receptivity, otherwise students may perform below their real potential.

- Another criterion of this indicator analyzes the balance in the evaluation between the final results (what was learned) and the way in which the students reached that result (the learning process). Identical to the previous item, a greater number of teachers gave answers with high values, indicating an appreciation for evaluations that focus on both the result and the process, and others, giving scores with more modest values, suggest that in certain contexts, the emphasis falls too much on the result, ignoring individual progress.

- The last item examines whether assessment methods are adapted to respond to the diversity of pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN), ensuring fair and personalised assessment. Many of the teachers indicate a favorable perception regarding the adaptation of the evaluation tools to the varied needs of the students but, unfortunately, a good part of them suggested the existence of gaps in the

adaptation of the evaluation methods for certain categories of beneficiaries.

The comments in this section focus on the need for assessment methods that reduce student stress, emphasizing not only the outcome, but also the process. Also here are suggested some additions to

diversify the evaluation methods, so that they consider the particularities of each student, including those with special educational needs (SEN), which allow a correct assessment of the individual progress of students, contributing to a positive educational experience.

The conceptual provisions of the written curriculum state that the Assessment of Learning Outcomes must be effective, motivating..... (choose level from 1 to 5 for each criterion):

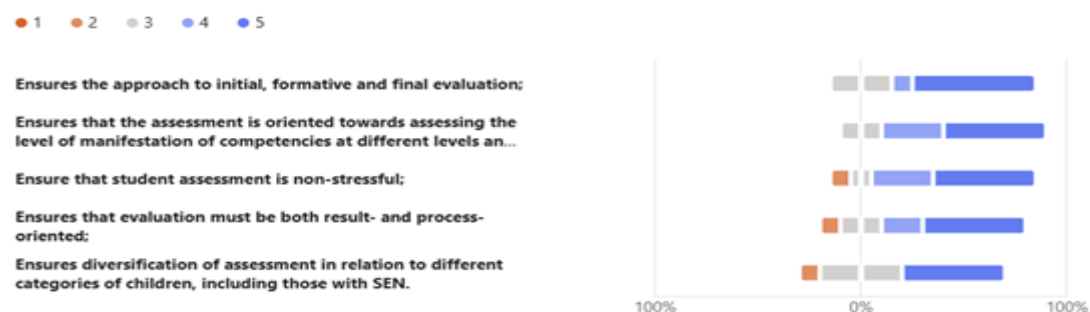


Fig. 5. Image of aspects of the curricular concept regarding the relevance of learning assessment

4. Conclusions

The high responses (scores between 4 and 5) indicate that the majority of teachers believe that the curriculum in the Physical Education discipline provides an environment in which students can learn and evolve according to their individual pace and potential, favoring a personalized learning approach.

The indicators on curricular coherence show that the document manages to integrate transversal, general and specific competences, ensuring a smooth transition between the different levels of knowledge and application, which contributes to the personalization of the educational process.

The activities and exercises are evaluated as well differentiated, which

favors active involvement and a better understanding of the contents by the students. It reflects a curriculum that emphasizes active and experiential learning.

Although most teachers give high scores to assessment methods that stimulate students' interest and engagement, there are also indications that, in certain contexts, the emphasis falls too much on the end result. Thus, the need for a balance between the evaluation of the process and that of the results is highlighted, as well as the adaptation of the evaluation methods to the diversity of students, including the needs of those with SEN.

The teachers' comments underline the importance of reintroducing grade assessment in secondary and high school

education, implementing regular feedback mechanisms and developing specific guidelines for the Physical Education discipline, to reflect modern teaching methods and adapt strategies to the current needs of education.

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Note: *The paper was carried out within the State Subprogram "Theory and methodology of continuous and cyclic monitoring and development of school curriculum", cod 01.14.01.*