POSSIBILITIES OF APPROACHING THE SCHOOL SCENARIO IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION INITIAL TEACHING TRAINING

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ABSTRACT
As set forth by Brazilian national guidelines for teacher training (Resolution CNE/CP 2/2015), teaching degree programs must include in their curricula formative activities (2200 hours), theoretical and practical activities for in-depth knowledge of specific areas of interest for students (200 hours), supervised traineeship (400 hours) and Practice as Curricular Component – PCC (400 hours). The research objective was to analyze possibilities of approaching the school scenario in Physical Education initial training – teaching. The analysis method was qualitative and comprehended 59 subjects, 41 of which were undergraduate students, and 18 were professors, all participating by means of semi-structured interviews. Data were treated through content analysis with the aid of NVivo 10 software. Both professors and students pointed out supervised traineeship as the main activity carried out during the course for approaching the school environment. The interviews also highlighted the need for other initiatives that strengthen contact with schools throughout initial training in order to broaden the repertoire of experiences encompassing a Physical Education teacher’s routine in Basic Education, such as PCC, which can be established as a strategy to make this diversification viable.

Keywords: Initial teacher training, Physical Education. Teaching. Curricular Practices.

Introduction

In order to question pedagogical actions of Physical Education training programs – teaching, it is necessary to understand the specificities of this process, which have already been pointed out by different researches. Studies have analyzed Physical Education (PE) initial training and indicated elements that characterize this stage (social and bodily experiences, academic journey, curricular structure, role of training, national guidelines for teacher training, relationship between theory and practice, pedagogical competences, constitution of varied types of knowledge, professional identity, pedagogical autonomy), as well as changes necessary to bring college classes closer to the school reality and to the specificities that shape it, including: lesson planning, political-pedagogical project design, meetings, hour-activity, relationship with students, directors, educators and community.

Defending the complexity of PE teaching requires considering the specificities involved in working in this area within the school space, or also what kind of knowledge is
the scope of professors and needs to be addressed in undergraduate courses. Specific elements of the teaching job include understanding the work and the meaning attributed to it, as well as pieces of knowledge related to classroom activity, which are mobilized in concrete teaching situations occurring in classroom routines. However, PE initial training programs, regardless of the educational perspective that they preconize, are criticized by PE teachers who work in schools due to discrepancy between the content covered during undergraduate courses and the knowledge required during actual teaching intervention. This indicates that, during pedagogical action, teachers working in Basic Education can perceive a disconnection between what is learned in the course (university) and professional requirements (school).

With respect to initial training, students could learn about school PE specificities, since “in the particular case of Physical Education, the content development context is different from that of other subjects”. In addition, “as for space, the treatment given to knowledge in this area, organically articulated with time organization, requires the construction in the school of distinct spaces compared to other subjects”. It is also worth considering that, “in physical education, spaces and material aspects particularly have a major role: they contribute to organizing students’ and teachers’ activities; specific knowledge in this field needs to be developed taking into account all contents, materials and spaces available for PE teachers. It is this movement, this structure and dynamics that need to be presented to students by means of the basic university-school bridge and, especially, of actions with potential to form this bond – for instance, Practice as Curricular Component (PCC) and Supervised Curricular Traineeship (SCT).

Several studies discuss supervised traineeship and its possibilities in university and basic school contexts; however, there are other pedagogical actions that bring college students closer to the school scenario, such as curricular practices, which are rarely addressed in publications about PE initial teacher training. Thus, there still are few researches that analyze PCC in the reality of PE teacher training. About the denomination, it is worth noting that Resolution CNE/CP 2/2015 refers to “Practice as Curricular Component”, but studies that deal with this theme also use the synonym “curricular practices”, and these are the terms we will be using throughout the present article to refer to PCC. As for the isolated expression “practice”, within the initial teacher training sphere, it involves varied teaching experiences, such as simulated lessons in the university itself or lessons given by teachers in training with school students.

In teacher training courses, it is necessary to make it clear that “training actions related to practice (class observation, discussion, class preparation, projects and classroom management), are more significant to the future teacher when carried out from a real situation contextualized and integrated with their future professional field” (our own highlight). For this reason, the questions guiding the conduction of this research were: What important opportunities in Physical Education initial training – teaching can bring undergraduate students closer to their future intervention space? How are these opportunities interpreted by professors and students throughout the initial training course? Is PCC a strategy being developed that contributes to future teachers’ integration with Basic Education? Therefore, the objective of this research was to analyze possibilities of approaching the school scenario in Physical Education initial training – teaching.

Methods

Participants

All undergraduate students attending the last year of the Physical Education course – teaching from a public university in the state of Paraná, Brazil, were invited to participate in the research, which estimative would total 48 individuals. However, at the data collection
moment (second half of 2016), full-time and evening classes had, respectively, 24 and 17 enrolled students. The participation proposal targeted senior students because they were those with more elements to answer the interview script questions, since the latter addressed all actions involving the whole initial training process and therefore would not suit the answers of other students from other years.

The invitation for classes to participate in the research comprehended the following moments: 1) Two program professors were requested to dedicate part of their lessons to present the research; 2) The researchers met students to inform them about research objectives and answer questions concerning the methodological procedure; 3) An interview scheduling sheet was handed out, which contained student’s name and date and time available for participation. The third moment occurred three times for each class so that all students were reached, which also prevented the exclusion of absent ones. The scheduling sheet was also considered as an instrument to identify number of acceptances for participation in the research, since non-completion of the sheet would mean that participation was declined. Thus, the research included 41 undergraduate students, 26 (63%) and 15 (37%) of which attended full-time and evening classes, respectively. Among participants, 22 (54%) were female, and 19 (46%) were male.

The Physical Education Department of the university investigated has 42 professors. A total of 19 permanent professors who taught teacher training courses in 2016 were invited to participate in the interview. The purpose was to invite them in person and individually in order to explain the research objectives and why they would be part of the group of participants. All 19 Physical Education course – teaching professors were approached this way and engaged with the proposal by scheduling the interviews. Other five professors are also part of the teaching staff of this course but were not invited to participate for conflict of interest.

Although 19 professors participated in the interviews, the research used data referring to the interviews of 18 only, since one of them requested that their report was discarded after receiving its transcription via e-mail. Thus, the research was made up of 18 professors, eight (44%) of which were female, and ten (56%) were male. Regarding education, three (16.67%) were masters, and 15 (83.33%) were doctors. The professor with the longest time of activity had been teaching at the Department for 36 years, and the professor hired most recently started teaching at that Institution a year ago. Still taking the data collection year as reference, 39% (f 7) of the teaching staff has been working at the university for five years at most; 11% (f 2) between six and ten years; 6% (f 1) from 11 to 20 years; 33% (f 6) from 21 to 30 years; and 11% (f 2) for more than 30 years.

**Procedures**

The qualitative research was chosen for being the one with objective possibilities of looking at teaching from the insightful perspective of human beings, who are study participants and actors. Besides, in this research, data have a descriptive character with a focus on impressions reported by participants.

Data collection used audio-recorded semi-structured interviews. The researchers designed two scripts, one of which was intended for professors (with ten generating themes), while the other one was aimed at the students (with nine points of inquiry). These scripts were designed from matrices including research objectives, analysis indicators and respective questions. It is worth highlighting that the present article will present specific script points related to practices that approach the school context and are enabled throughout initial training (becoming familiar with the Basic Education routine before traineeship; relationship between PCC and SCT; relationship between university and basic school; PCC and other actions that bring university and school closer); however, the interviews also covered other
aspects of this process, including: subject contents and their connection with the school; institutional limitations and possibilities to promote teaching experiences; competence dimensions in teaching activity; relationship between theory and practice.

For being semi-structured, the interview has no fixed order of questions, that is, the interviewee talks about the theme in question in such a way that information emerges authentically. The semi-structured interview lies between the structured interview (does not expand questions) and the unstructured interview (free speech) and develops from a basic scheme not rigidly applied, which allows for adaptations by the interviewer. Therefore, the type of interview that is more in line with qualitative research in education is a less structured one, as it amplifies and diversifies analysis elements.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze data emerging from the interviews, NVivo 10 software was used to organize and systematize results, along with the content analysis (CA) methodology proposed by Laurence Bardin, whose stages are: pre-analysis; material exploration; treatment of results, inference and interpretation. These inter-related stages include: document selection; material exploration; coding into recording units; category grouping; category description; and interpretation of results. Both categorization and coding make up content analysis; the latter selects recording units, while the former groups these very same fragments according to their characteristics. Thus, associating NVivo instruments to CA techniques was relevant to organizing and interpreting this research results.

Therefore, data analysis was performed through the following actions: 1) reading and interpretation of transcribed interviews; 2) organization of interviews on NVivo (sources) with classification by attributes; 3) category definition and description (nodes and sub-nodes) from research and interview objectives; 4) coding from recording units; 6) fragment categorization into primary and secondary nodes; 5) analysis of results.

Moreover, it is worth stressing that the categories (nodes) and sub-categories (secondary nodes) were determined from research objectives, theoretical foundation and speeches by the interviewees themselves, who referred to elements not always expected but that were important for comprehending their ideas and for analyzing the results. The study that generated data for the present article had five categories (primary nodes) and 21 sub-categories (secondary nodes), and this text will present one of the sub-categories: “other actions with the school” (which was part of category “Practice as Curricular Component”).

Results and Discussion

Some impressions on the Physical Education course – teaching investigated were frequently mentioned throughout the interviews, such as need for other activities linked to school context besides the SCT. This occurred because the script generating points included questions referring to actions that bring university and basic education together during initial training, so the participants recalled practices that already existed in the course in order to answer the inquiries.

Sub-category “other actions with the school” is represented by 40 sources (Interviews) and 85 references (recording units) and includes the following activities: supervised traineeship; festivals and events; additional academic activities; teaching initiation; and extension projects. Practice as Curricular Component was not mentioned as an action within the course, although professors recognized it as a National Curricular Guidelines requirement (Resolution CNE/CP 2/2015) for teacher training.

The sources include both students and professors, who referred to actions towards inserting undergraduate students into public schools. The most remembered practice was the
supervised and mandatory curricular traineeship, which will be presented from the undergraduate teaching students’ perspective (Figure 1), followed by the professors’ impressions (Figure).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Recording Unit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>We have traineeship, but only in the third and fourth years. It would be interesting if we could at least observe or have a little notion of a teacher’s routine, see how a PE class happens in reality, among other things like school environment, students’ behaviors, the actual school everyday routine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>I did not think that being in the frontline would be so hard […]. For those students starting college now, it would be valid if they became familiar with the school context before [the traineeship].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4</td>
<td>The traineeship, even though we complain it has too many hours, a heavy workload, I think it is not enough because we will have other realities as teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S12</td>
<td>Perhaps visiting schools, observing. (...) We have that in traineeship but I think that maybe it is not enough to prepare us. […] I think that by visiting schools we could have a clearer view of a school’s reality, conditions, materials, courts; we would start to think how to change that. Because, from the start of our traineeship, we face this deficit in the school; maybe, if we had these practices we could deal better with that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S23</td>
<td>It would be better [visiting the school before the traineeship]. I think we would be more prepared to start the traineeship and manage to deal with the students mainly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S24</td>
<td>Things are different in the school; now, with the traineeship, we observe both the students’ behavior and the school’s materials, this kind of thing. It is very different, it cannot be real, the same thing. […] It would help a lot in the traineeship [if they visited the school beforehand]; we would be more prepared, would know how to deal with some things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S30</td>
<td>On my first traineeship day I was lost, so the teacher had to keep telling me: “Now it is time do this, to do that (...)”. It would be nice if I had had a previous contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S35</td>
<td>During traineeship it is when we end up seeing how things really happen; before so we have no idea and sometimes things get hard, you end up feeling discouraged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S38</td>
<td>We start traineeship raw, completely raw […] At all stages, […] We should go through a little bit of everything so we could see, because it is kind of complicated. […] It is an experience that we should have.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1.** Relationship between supervised curricular traineeship and other practices linked to the school, from students’ perspective.

*Source:* The authors

Figure 1 recording units emerged from generating points of the discussion around the relationship between university and school, actions for approaching Basic Education, and the students’ desire to having become familiar with this context since the beginning of the course, before the SCT. Thus, the results allow inferring that there is a positive relationship between curricular practices and mandatory traineeship, as the former would enable students to anticipate some elements typical of a PE teacher’s routine in public schools, while the latter would be developed with greater confidence by the undergraduate teaching students. Student 12, for instance, advocates that school visits before the SCT would allow for a more careful observation of the peculiarities of this scenario, which could also promote reflections about changes in favor of education.

In general, the students were favorable to other experiences with Basic Education that went beyond traineeship to complement it. This is indicative that the group of students would be receptive to PCC in the Physical Education course – teaching investigated as long as it was organized in such a way that formative objectives were well defined. In this sense,
curricular practices should be pleasant and formative at the same time, a task not always easy
to organize, but necessary to produce desired approaching and preparation effects.

In a research conducted by Araújo and Leitinho on PCC in a Physical Education
course – teaching, students interviewed who recognized this action attributes its importance to
different experiences in real learning situations and believe that it allows for a better
understanding of contents covered in college classrooms. More specifically about the
relationship between PCC and SCT, a study carried out by Barbosa et al. found that
professors in a teaching training course were confused about these two curricular components.
It is therefore necessary to be attentive to the fact that each one of these activities must
comprehend 400 hours in teacher initial training and be complementary, that is, together
they need to make up 800 hours of activities linked to Basic Education.

The next recording units refer to professors’ perspectives on possibilities of contact with
schools before PE teaching traineeship (Figure 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professor</th>
<th>Recording Unit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Sports-related subjects are taught in the first half, we end up not having a closer contact with students when they start the traineeship. So, the ideal would be us following them up with their school practice, but this does not happen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P8</td>
<td>The workload we have today in the traineeship is for them to experience the school dynamics, structure, organization, operation. Why can’t they do this earlier? Why can’t they learn about planning, have an interview with teachers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P11</td>
<td>Sometimes our students start their traineeship fearful [...] And I see that curricular practices contribute to that. [...] School is where you learn, where you teach, it is dynamic; so, with curricular practices, students can already see where they are stepping into, so that when they start the traineeship they have no fear but excitement [...]. For me, that is how curricular practices should work, as something to contribute to their formation and their will to stay in the school, because if this does not happen, they will start their traineeship and do everything in a hurry to get rid of it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P12</td>
<td>It would be nice, but we already have a curricular traineeship, so there should be another one (...) Apparently, there is a proposal for the next year, about having part of the content, part of the workload dedicated to this school visit, for activities involving our students and the schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P13</td>
<td>Virtually the whole third year is spent in schools, the students complete the whole year with a significant traineeship workload, so I think that, particularly in my classes, there is no need for it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P16</td>
<td>As far as I know, only during the traineeship it is when the students really have this possibility of being in their field of practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P17</td>
<td>Today, the only opportunity they have to experience this is through the traineeship, they use these contents in the traineeship. We do not have yet something that prepares them for acting a different way.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Figure 2.** Possibilities of contact with schools before traineeship in the Physical Education course – teaching, from professors’ perspectives.

**Source:** The authors

The most representative idea among professors is that PCC can contribute to SCT
futures activities for the possibility of it preparing students for the school environment and minimizing their worries as to specific challenges of the teaching profession. However, it
should be made clear that PCC cannot be characterized only as a foundation to traineeship and that its relevance does not lie only on introducing an already consolidated activity in the
course – the SCT. The idea is that these activities should develop in articulation and complement each other, especially because both actions can be structured and implemented
throughout initial training. Furthermore, they should not be competing actions in the course,
which means that it is necessary to forget the idea that, if traineeship has a consolidated place in the course, other proposals integrated with Basic Education are not needed.

Professor 13, for instance, states that the students already have traineeship workload as of the second half of the course, so she considers as dispensable other activities in conjunction with schools within the subjects of which she is in charge. Also about the supervised and mandatory curricular traineeship, some professors mention that it is the only more solid action in the course that brings teaching students and school community closer, and there are those who defend other opportunities for this bond during the initial training process of PE teachers.

In-context, critical and reflexive curricular practices can indicate initial training ideals in the speech plane but are oftentimes far from being implemented into courses due to barriers such as the academic community’s lack of knowledge about the meaning of these practices and about successful experiences already happening. It is therefore necessary to broaden the debate in teacher training courses in order to stimulate PCC organization proposals and carry them out.

Festivals or events promoted by some subjects during the course were also mentioned throughout the interviews as examples of pedagogical activities that go beyond the university environment. The recording units that represent this idea are displayed in Figure 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Recording Unit</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S28</td>
<td><em>In the first year, we had First-Aid, we visited the fire department. For track and field, we had a mini festival.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S29</td>
<td><em>This should not be left for the third year only, it could happen before that, with promotion, for example, of events, like a few years ago, events, recreation days, track and field tournament day.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S31</td>
<td><em>We had the responsibility of bringing two kids to participate in the event, and some schools also let us bring their children here [...] I think that was the only contact we had outside another subject with school students, but not inside the school.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S38</td>
<td><em>We had this track and field event once with kids [...] We had to come up with track and field activities, as if it was a huge event [...] And that was the only contact I had with kids during the course.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P18</td>
<td><em>This event is open to school students, and I really like for them to participate, but they not always come, only if they can, if they want to. I pay attention to city events as well.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3.** Festivals and events of Physical Education course (teaching) subjects outside the university

**Source:** The authors

It is possible to notice that the festival or event examples mentioned are meaningful to initial training, as they provide experimentation with teaching elements; however, these initiatives have a specific and sporadic nature, so they cannot be considered as PCC, despite their relevance to the formative process. While verifying PCC design and organization in PE courses, Antunes found that in one of the Higher Education Institutions researched this curricular component was integrated with complementary academic activities (CAAs), which, in their turn, included events and festivals. In this sense, it is worth recalling that CAAs make up 200 hours of teaching training courses workload and, just as the SCT, cannot be mistaken for PCC, but rather articulated with it.

The other dimensions were little representative in the interviews; for this reason, they are gathered in Figure 4 and include: teaching initiation, extension projects and direct school experiences.
For the teaching degree, the IPTIS [Institutional Program for Teaching Initiation Scholarships] was really important because we would engage in interventions in the school, in addition to studies and meetings, and this really helped us think about how to work and deal with contents.

The undergraduate students have experiences soon as the course begins, as to education, in schools, that is, projects or programs, for example, IPTIS.

We had to teach a gymnastic class in the school and report the things that worked and those that did not work out that well.

I understand that extension is maybe a situation through which undergraduate students can really approach it.

These actions that include the school environment oftentimes remain in the proposal plane or are characterized as a means for one to claim the existence of certain initiatives that reach the goal of bringing undergraduate teaching students closer to their future intervention space, so other activities in this regard would not be necessary at the moment. Figure 4 examples show specific actions in the course, which, somehow, refer to the university and other education spaces, without any of them being mentioned as PCC.

Teaching training course professors should be instructed as to the meaning of Practice as Curricular Component and how it can be covered in initial training curricula, whether within subjects or by means of a specific project. Thus, the undergraduate teaching students need to recognize PCC so that they can request it in the course and be committed to the exercise of this action, if implemented.

It has been made clear that the course investigated involves actions along with schools, some of which are already consolidated (SCT and IPTIS) and others that are more specific (teaching experiences, CAA and festivals). However, PCC is not one of these actions. Although activities articulated with the school community exist, they cannot be characterized as curricular practices, since there is no specific project for it.

Perhaps, the teaching staff, in initial training courses, is having trouble comprehending, defining and organizing Practice as Curricular Component, integrating it with college classes by means of planning, that is, there should be a specific project for this action, with the approval and awareness of all professors. This means that professors would understand the objectives of these practices and would characterize it as an interdisciplinary element of the course because, from this initiative, university students would also recognize PCC as an action that is definitely part of the program curriculum.

**Final Considerations**

In order to verify the comprehension of Physical Education course (teaching) professors and undergraduate students about practices provided in initial training that bring future teachers closer to the school scenario, it was necessary to investigate activities being developed within the course and that promote contact between students and the Basic Education environment; thus, the reports referred to teaching initiation, festivals or events, specific teaching experiences throughout the course in other environments outside the campus, extension projects and supervised curricular traineeship.

Although some of the students mentioned teaching experiences within subjects, it has been found that PCC is not carried out in the course investigated, because for it to be called as
such, this action needs to be included in the Course Pedagogical Project description and be developed throughout the formative process, totaling 400 hours, which does not happen in the reality researched. In other words, the practices – sporadic or not – (simulated classes, or also teaching experiences) provided within subjects are not considered as “Practice as Curricular Component” in the ways presented by the 2015 Brazilian National Curricular Guidelines for initial training if they are not covered in a PCC planned and specific project that is integrated with the course Project as well as organized and recognized by the entire teaching staff. Moreover, consolidated initiatives, especially the SCT, were frequently recalled throughout the interviews for being the only examples the students had to talk about these moments of contact with public schools. Still about these activities, the excerpts show the students’ contempt with the opportunity of experiencing the peculiarities of the job.

It is clear how observation and experimentation of living contents within school environment can contribute to the understanding of PE specific elements and the teaching career. This justifies the creation of chances to broaden this repertoire of experiences, with PCC being a strategy capable of promoting this diversification. Investigating school experiences enabled in the course researched made it possible to identify the peripheral position occupied by curricular practices in pedagogical activities being developed. At the same time that traineeships, projects and the IPTIS are actions that indeed bring teaching students closer to their future professional intervention space, PCC is exposed by few professors as an idea yet to be implemented at the Physical Education Department.

PCC features among actions that have potential to articulate basic and higher education levels throughout undergraduate courses. It is an integral element of guidelines for teaching training and should be incorporated into the set of pedagogical activities of PE teaching courses, but still neglected in some realities. This gap may negatively affect the quality of initial training, for restricting access to social teaching intervention spaces and blur the Basic Education scenario to the eyes of future teachers. In this sense, other studies addressing PCC possibilities still need to be developed in order to verify the treatment given to this component in different teaching training realities.

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