

# PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS CONCERNING EXTERNAL DETERMINATION

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## **Abstract**

In this study, we aimed at investigating how physical education teachers behave. They teach at initial stages in the Primary School for education system of the State of São Paulo. Such behaviour includes a pedagogic proposal created by the Education Department in 2003. In such year, arose a return of assigning lessons to Physical Education specialist teachers. Six DERCO teachers were interviewed in 2003, i.e. three experienced and three beginners. On one hand, teachers assign value to claims, since they feel important; on the other hand, however, they do not agree with claims imposed without previously being asked. In addition, they questioned the claims which are blind to school reality.

**Keywords:** Physical Education Teachers' Practices - External Determination

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## **Introduction**

The education system of the State of São Paulo until 2002 had not physical education (PE) specialist teachers for cycle 1<sup>1</sup>; thus, disciplines were managed by polyvalent teacher<sup>2</sup>. In 2003, PE specialist teachers returned to cycle 1 lessons.

Soon after the beginning of lessons in 2003, all PE teachers received from their school unities a convocation from the Diretoria de En-

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1-In the public system of the State of São Paulo, the Cycle I was the four first stages in the Primary School. Although it was approved by the CEB on 9 November 2005, the Primary School change for nine years, such change occurred in fact from the beginning of 2009. Since the Primary School became nine years, the cycle I now corresponds to the period of compulsory school education which goes from the 1st year to the 5th year.

2-A polyvalent teacher is when the own teacher performs the coordinator role, e.g. fixing the assembly time during the week etc.

sino Região Campinas Oeste (DERCO) [Local Education Authority (LEA) for Campinas West Region] to train the cycle 1 PE teachers. In such training, system teachers knew the proposal of the Secretaria do Estado da Educação do Estado de São Paulo (SEE/SP, 2003) [São Paulo State Department of Education], including the teaching material to be adopted, i.e. booklet.

The LEA by using its Technical and Pedagogical Assistant is responsible to perform the proposal, thus, becoming responsible to spread the object to study and teach PE during Primary School. The DERCO proposal establishment was performed based on a booklet consisting of activities which PE teachers should apply in school.

Such booklet, although including concepts related to the health re-education approach<sup>3</sup>, was worked out according to the premises of pedagogical current, known as developmentalist<sup>4</sup>.

Teachers should record students' production, which would be presented by using portfolio and panels (at the end of the school year) and monthly or bimonthly meetings, considering that the LEA summoned teachers for such meetings.

In this wise, we aimed at understanding in this study, based on teachers' manifestations, how they dealt with the proposal imposed hierarchically by the SEE-SP/CENP.

## Methodology

This study is qualitative for few subjects and non-quantified data. Ludke and André (1986) assert that such investigation considers natural environment as its straight data source and researchers as its major tool. It means that (a) the data collected is largely descriptive, (b) process is more relevant than product, (c) 'meaning' people put it down to

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3-The main academic representants for renewed health approach are the professors Dartagnan Pinto Guedes and Markus Vinicius Nahas. Guedes and Guedes (1997) and Nahas (1992) stress how important is a school PE for the health. To do so, they show the necessity of a relation between empiric knowledge and theoretical knowledge for physical activity, physical aptitude, and health.

4-The main author for the developmentalist approach is the professor Go Tani. Tani et al. (1988) classify that all human behaviour pertain to one of the three domains: cognitive, affective-social, and motor, and for most behaviours such three domains are involved.

things and life are special focus for researchers, and (d) data analysis tend to use an inductive process.

### **Subjects' choice and profile**

Six teachers were defined at the Primary School initial stage, i.e. (a) three experienced before 2003 and (b) three beginners precisely in 2003 in the education system of the State of São Paulo. It means teachers seen as inexperienced to teach at that time when the proposal was established.

Such classification was based on Huberman (1992)<sup>5</sup>. The author established teachers' professional lifecycle from 1 to 3 years old of career: entrance (groping); from 4 to 6: stabilisation and consolidation of a pedagogical repertoire; from 7 to 25: calmness, emotional distance, conservatism; from 35 to 40: disinvestment (calm or bitter).

For a better identification, the teachers of this study will be named according to the group they pertain. The experienced teachers will be called ET1, ET2 and ET3, while 2003 training teachers as TT1, TT2 and TT3.

### **The used tools**

We recorded interviews with six DERCO teachers. Semi-structured interviews were performed to collect the data. Based on Boni and Quaresma (2005), the semi-structured interviews combine open and closed questions, thus the informant can talk on the proposed theme.

### **Teachers manifestations**

Nowadays, the regulatory and management bodies for education control schools by using hierarchically established power. Guidebooks and proposals often offered to teachers have been currently dis-

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5-A bibliographical cataloguing searching for a theoretical basis was performed to subsidise the classification and selection of teacher and, afterwards, the identification of the training teachers and experienced teachers. Interestingly, other authors have dedicated special attention to the studies involving development of academic career. The study of Huberman (1992), however, precedes other authors, being besides cited by them. The taxonomy of Huberman (1992), nevertheless, is a explanatory model which must be used flexibly.

cussed on this topic in the field of education. The actions to develop the syllabus and the intentions of who develop it are profoundly important. Hence, a reflection on the extremely negative factors over such document discourse and the practices for school is strictly necessary.

Our prime aim here is to discover how to understand how teachers deal with the management bodies for education. When the subjects have to face an external demand hierarchically established, they can show different reactions, essentially if the determinations were from compulsory decrees and rules. Concerning the relations of teachers with education purpose decided institutionally, Gimeno Sacristán (1999, p. 41) stresses that

(...) On one hand, accepting justifies teachers' function, autonomous professionalism conflict, right of academic function, and respect to the freedom of conscience. On the other hand, accepting the syllabus established or respecting other project (State, boss) is not an easy problem to solve.

The author says that the main point is the confusion, which have been taking shape along the history and becoming strong in such 'conflicting' relation. It explains why teachers are on one side and proposal makers on other side. As reference, there is the discussion on relation of teachers with the external demands, and for the interviews performed with teachers there were two relevant lines. The line 1 is how teachers manifest they deal with external demands. The line 2 is the need they feel to be heard and take part in the proposal creation. In the table 1, you can see the teachers' manifestation to confront the external claims in general.

EXPERIENCED TEACHERS	TRAINING TEACHERS
ET1: I think that claims are necessary because claims are valued, otherwise people just do nothing. They should also listen to the teachers.	TT1: Claims are really necessary, otherwise at times even the professional relax, so it is in fact necessary. A superior person to ask for the service, stuffs, production; so occur, you know (...) As I've already said, it is necessary because teachers doing whatever they want means danger. A cool proposal, of course, should be made. Claims are necessary, though.
PE2: I think claims are wrong. Firstly, you should ask teachers and not coming suddenly ready.	TT2: For me, some claims are necessary, but not as 'do it!', you must do like this or that; otherwise, claims for help and not to obligation. I think teachers should have a say in because 'they' are in control.
ET3: Often such claims come from the high-income people and they don't know our life here (...) The persons in charge should listen teachers.	TT3: Such claims are frequent, huh? I usually don't agree with them. You see it? Such claims are very asked. I think teachers should be listen first, then introducing proposals.

Box 1: Summary of teachers' manifestation to confront the external claims in general

As showed in table 2, ET1 and TT1 revealed necessity for claims due to two reasons, i.e. (a) valuing the area and (b) the non-relaxing of professionals concerning their work. By contrast, ET2, TT2 and TT3 do not agree with the claims when it is imposition. The ET3 questions the claims of those who cannot see the school reality.

Regardless of the work time (experienced and training), one factor was stressed by all teachers, i.e. before the management bodies performing the proposals, teachers should be listen. When they were questioned on what they thought regarding external demands, which teachers usually are submitted, they manifested diversely, at times contradictorily.

Sometimes we want to cry because we could work easily, but we are not able to because... cos they cannot see the school reality. I mean, the children are very poor and we've got no material to be used. Even though, however, I think there should be claims. I always say to you and I keep saying that the teachers don't feel in charge of Education. Because of such teachers, then, we end being responsible as well (...) So, it's what I've told ye. You just go there just to do your duty. You see it? Be-

cause sometimes we've got better things to do, but you've gotta do what they wanna and impose (ET1).

Such teacher shows two lines. On one hand, the 'despair' concerning the claims; on the other hand, that such claims are necessary for a better quality education. Rus Perez (1998) exposes that introducing any change or proposal when arriving at school becomes conflicting. In the case of such teacher, the conflict is ambiguous, since at the same time arise claims arise also the necessity.

The single syllabus for all state is other important element related by teachers, and it was seen as an advantage:

You know, I didn't see many advantages, but... the advantage was that you've got a line... In fact, the State was showing a way to you get it... that you could work... a way to all State work (TT2).

A line of work for everyone was good, because I've got a sorta work at my school and my neighbour colleague have a sorta work thoroughly different. A positive point for such proposals was that everyone in the system worked with the same stuff. For example, the student leaves here, Parque Itajaí, and goes to DIC; or leaves here, Campinas, and goes to other city, e.g. Votuporanga. Thus, the same content will be learnt. (...) I think it is an advantage cos students can be moved from a school to another keeping the content sequence. The advantage for a single syllabus is this (EP3).

When they have to confront the rule trend regionally (in this case, in the State), teachers agree with such trend. They alleged mainly as advantage the fact of the syllabus being homogeneous shows a line of work in which all teachers deal with the same content. Considering how important is to control and organise the contents, we show another aspect, i.e. teachers can transform a homogeneous proposal into something more socially critical and more personally significant, for both teachers and their students. Apple and Teitelbaun (1991, p. 69–70) help in this reasoning when stating that a discussion is necessary, which organise the interests and necessities, both local and global. At the present,

(...) there are both individual aims developed together by teachers and by local community and compulsory aims for all state. When there are not individual skills used by teachers and lists of academic competences ‘appropriate’ to all State.

When the subjects must apply and execute something without taking part in it, the principles sustaining the technical rationality are present, since it reproduces what was thought by the others. Contreras (2002), when discussing the technical rationality model, stresses that such professional practice model consists in solving problems instrumentally, by using a theoretical and technical knowledge previously available; thus, becoming instrumental. Based on the ideas of Apple and Teitelbaun (1991) and Contreras (2002) and relating it with teachers’ talk, we can comprehend that teachers see for such specific cases, i.e. the management bodies for education got what they wanted. It means subjects agreeing with a ready situation. Disconsidering context generalisation and extremely negative proposals, it is obvious that (in the case of teachers previously mentioned) streamlining the academic work technique was included by the teachers. Hence, they agree with the idea to apply what was imposed to them; thus, they could not become critical subjects and authors of their own practices.

Adversely, one can understand how the claims are important to them. Somehow, they feel worthwhile by such claims. Concerning the single syllabus, teachers conceive it as a help. As stated by the EP2, due to the functional situation being OFA and always changing of school unity, the proposal is relevant because it can continue the predecessor’s work. Such factors stressed by all teachers (training and experienced) show that even in the case they being less doers, they agree partially with the claims and homogeneous syllabus model.

Although the teachers interviewed agree with some assumptions adopted by the SEE–SP/CENP, it is highly relevant learn more on the gulf between the proposal makers and teachers. Gimeno Sacristán and Pérez Gómez (1998) stress the relation between education managers (specialists) and teachers. Thus, they expose that perhaps the inappropriateness between education planners and teachers occurs due to the lack of knowledge for concrete practice of proposal makers, who does not know the effective pedagogical practice. Considering the relation between the proposal makers and teachers, a claim was unanimous for the interviewees. All of them complain of construction, creation and

introduction of proposals being performed only by the superior bodies; thus, disrespecting the teachers, i.e.

Often such claims come from the high-income people and they don't know our life here (...) And often what is asked from the high-income people cannot be put into practice by the low-income people; or perhaps cos of clientele, or school reality, or lack of physical space... then... or lack of support from directors. However, I reckon that the basis like that for the low-income people should be more considerable before high-income people come ready. I think they should let us talk a bit since we're 'in' the school [...] They should perhaps give teachers more freedom or perhaps first listen teachers; so, then, they should introduce the proposals (EP3).

For me, teachers should have a say in cos 'they' are in the control, 'they' are with students in the court from the 1st year to the 2nd year. So, 'they' know what is and what isn't necessary, and not the people who send the answers [...] I suppose there's an in-between wall, huh? Such wall oughta torn down, so we could talk to them (TT2).

I reckon that they really have to claim but simultaneously I think that they should be more present as well. So, they could see our reality, cos claimin' outta reality is utterly ridiculous (...) Then, that's what I've told ye; you go there just to do your duty, you see it? Because sometimes we've got better things to do, but you've gotta do what they wanna and impose (ET1).

The teachers' talk harmonise with the studies of Rus Perez (1994). When such author assessed the education policy of the Ministry of Education of the State of Sao Paulo within the last 25 years, observed that when the programmes, measures and proposal were created it did not consider the agents' participation in decisions. Sampaio (2002), when mentioned the relation among teachers with the interventions officially installed, stressed the sheer action regarding adapting, convincing or adapting teacher for demands is not sufficient, defending that

Teachers are necessary to formulate the proposals; thus, one



cannot talk on academic work, training and school changes imagining who are the teachers, what they know, what they have to change into their practice. They know identify the problems in their work, indicate what have been built, and their necessities (SAMPAIO, 2002, p. 7-8).

In the teachers' talk (experienced and training) we can obviously see they demand an active voice to elaborate proposals. Such fact should be considerable for the bodies who elaborate and introduce the proposal. As warned by Gimeno Sacristán (1999), to understand the success and failure when implementing any external-decided proposal, one must search for the interpretation in the people that inexorably is in charge of the own development within school daily life. Guilherme (2002, p. 99), when indicating a potential way to implement proposals, points that 'to introduce any pedagogical proposal or decree is really necessary to stimulate teachers, the main agents for changes, to achieve success for what was proposed'. Hutmacher (1996), nevertheless, asserts that today there is not a splitting between the thinking people (education planners) and making people (school teachers). As the author,

such splitting stresses more and more the classical and blocking misunderstanding: the ones who reflect tend to consider the ones who act as ignorant; the ones who act tend to consider the specialist as Lords who does not know anything on practical reality (HUTMACHER, 1996, p. 72).

Based on what the mentioned authors stressed and on teachers' talk, both training and experienced teachers can say that the interviewees and authors agree with what is important for teachers' participation when elaborating proposals.

A non-dialogue between the superior body agents and teachers was found. In addition, all teachers and authors agree with how important is such dialogue to elaborate and introduce any proposal. Considering such two facts, is relevant to consider: Why this did not happen? (or) What are the interests involved in the authoritarian manner to impose the pedagogical innovations?

We can understand that the dialogue do not occur because the management bodies for education are connected to principles for techni-

cal rationality. Such principles help to state some power relations. It means a way of those people who occupy a superior function impose their interests and assert their power. In addition, when the resources for teachers are not created to they take part actively in the proposal creation, such management bodies judge teachers as incompetent. As described, such bodies present already–finished proposals in order to ‘cure’ the lack of education, salary, besides precarious work conditions for teachers.

### **Final considerations**

In general, teachers showed an ambiguous conversation. On one side, they valued the claims, since all of them presented the necessity of claims for two reasons, i.e. (a) valuing the PE area (understood as without value in school) and (b) the non-relaxing of professionals concerning their work. On the other hand, teachers do not agree with the claims imposed before being asked. They also questioned the claims from other reality but school reality.

Other important aspect mentioned by teachers is how to elaborate a single syllabus for the whole State of São Paulo, pointing it as a positive fact. When they have to confront a more global standard (in this case, in the State), both teacher groups (experienced and training) agreed with that. They alleged mainly as advantage the fact of the syllabus being homogeneous shows a line of work in which all teachers deal with the same content. Authors as Apple and Teitelbaun (1991) and Contreras (2002) questioned this manner of school actors had agreed with a homogeneous syllabus. In addition, they stated that teachers acting this way contribute to a process which streamlines the academic work technique included by them. They also assert that teachers agreed with the idea of being sheer reproducers and not crucial subjects and authors of their own practices.

Such factors stressed by all teachers (training and experienced), however, show that even in the case they being less makers, they agree partially with the claims and homogeneous syllabus model. Such fact, nevertheless, did not stop the general demand of all interviewees, i.e. complain of construction, creation and introduction of proposals being performed without their participation; hence, they were not asked. Everyone claim active voice to elaborate proposals. It lead us the proposal of Gimeno Sacristán (1999) when stating that the

relation between the success and failure to introduce any external-decided proposal is inexorably linked to the form of proposal relation concerning teachers. The teachers said they wanted to be asked, they wanted to take part in developing what was intended by the SEE-SP/CENP.

Teachers' participation (chosen by the authors and the two teacher groups, the experienced and training) could lessen the gap between people who propose and implement the proposals (teachers). In addition, such participation contributed to makers not being treated as dreamers by teachers and teachers not being treated as incompetent by the management bodies of the education system. To do so, it is necessary a wide discussion between makers and teachers on the process to elaborate proposals, allowing active voice for teachers or more precisely: not only allowing active voice to teachers, but also helping to create conditions transform them into makers, as said Lima (2003); it is necessary to create possibilities to 'school actors' play as main actors concerning the traditional domain of the 'central actors' and their official texts. For such reality, better work conditions are necessary, in particular better salaries and the possibility of creating continued education.

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