

Teachers' view on basketball teaching and learning in Physical Education classes: the reality of Volta Redonda, RJ

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Abstract: The main purpose of this research was to investigate teachers' views on basketball teaching and learning in Physical Education classes in a school setting. Teachers selected to participate in this study come from public and private schools in Volta Redonda, RJ, Brazil, teaching 6th-9th grade classes of elementary school. This is a quantitative and qualitative study using content analysis. Data collection included interviews with 60 teachers who provided their opinions on the topic. Basketball development was investigated not only as content for Physical Education classes, but also as a dimension that goes beyond school boundaries and where sport plays an important role in society. Joint actions to provide the opportunity for basketball to grow as content for Physical Education classes may be a way to describe its implementation in all contexts, although the importance of the discipline in school should not be downplayed in favor of obtaining results in sports competitions.

Keywords: School. Basketball. Primary and secondary education. Learning.

1 INTRODUCTION

If we consider the latest results in international competitions, e. g., world championships, Pan-American Games and Olympic Games (RODRIGUES; DARIDO, 2012), we can see that this

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is not a good time for Brazilian basketball. It fails to repeat its performance from previous years, indicating certain absence of new players as well as problems concerning organizational structure.

Sometimes, sports officials and coaches openly declare that Physical Education is able to change that reality. That view was strengthened after the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, when the proposal of mandatory Physical Education in schools, which would be essential to turn Brazil into an “Olympic country”, gained strength to the point that the word “mandatory” is included when one mentions the presence of Physical Education in the so-called Basic Education curriculum under the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education – LDB 9394/96 (BRACHT, 2009). However, the fact that the discipline should focus on children’s overall development rather than on forming sports professionals is not always taken into account.

Thinking about basketball as a content in Physical Education classes and school’s role played in the context of sports, Kanters *et al.* (2012) argue that school is seen as the main institution to promote young people’s contact with that sport, since it is present in virtually all communities, attendance to it is mandatory and there is virtually permanent assistance by specialized teachers. In the same context, Dudley *et al.* (2012) point out that schools are seen as the most commonly used and cost-effective institutions to promote physical activities.

In the same vein, Marques (2004) notes that sports practice in Physical Education classes is a possibility to renew education, since breaking routine gives school the dynamism and pleasure that are essential to that activity. Booth (2009) says that considering mainly the complexity of pleasure, it is in the practice of movement that sports practice becomes more evident.

Basketball was chosen for its important role in the world and in Brazilian society, where its relationship to sport experiences in health and leisure reaches both practitioners

and fans. In addition, knowledge on sport allows expanding one's vision of different aspects and everyday practices, such as street basketball, wheelchair basketball, NBA, WNBA, and the several animations and movies about the sport in question.

All those manifestations make up the basketball culture. They include events, facts, dates, knowledges, experiences, practices, values built over time – a rich heritage produced by humanity and essential to be preserved and conveyed to new generations (RODRIGUES; DARIDO, 2012).

This article is an integral part of a broader study to investigate teachers' views on basketball teaching and learning in Physical Education classes in the school environment in Volta Redonda, RJ, as well as its practice by girls. The part of the study associated to this article intends to find out teachers' views on basketball learning and how Physical Education can work in this context. It is a quantitative-qualitative study aimed at understanding the reality to be investigated and its interpretation (SILVA *et al.*, 2009). Besides its importance to produce knowledge focused on the area of Physical Education, the study is justified by the relevance of its contribution to students' overall development.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 PARTICIPANTS

The participants were Physical Education graduates who were teaching in Volta Redonda's schools in 6th-9th grade classes. Subjects included 60 teachers of both sexes, representing 46.87% of teachers working in schools with elementary education in that city.

The study's participants underwent all mandatory procedures in accordance with the Committee on Research with Human Beings

of the Volta Redonda University Center – UniFOA – to which the project was submitted.

2.2 PROCEDURES

We used semi-structured interviews as data collection instruments. They included two questions: a) What is your view on basketball teaching and learning? b) How can Physical Education contribute to that process? In addition to interviews, we used a form containing questions related to respondents' field of work and characteristics surrounding their academic background. The questions were: a) In which school system do you work? b) What academic degree do you hold? We recorded interviews with 39 male and 21 female teachers, lasting six minutes on average. After the interviews, data collected were transcribed for further analysis (FERREIRA; MORAES, 2012).

Considering that a recorder allows collecting participants to answer without losing any information, the equipment used for the interviews was a digital Sony ICD-PX312F 2GB.

2.3 INSTRUMENT

Two procedures were used to validate the data collection instrument. Firstly, the instrument was validated by five teachers with recognized knowledge of the subject area and experience in validating data collection instruments, who suggested and oriented changes to make the interview guide more objective and consistent with the object of the study. Afterwards, and in order to test the reliability of the instrument, it was submitted to a pilot test with eight Physical Education teachers (13.33% of participants) with knowledge and experience in Physical Education. Secondly, teachers were asked to submit suggestions regarding the degree to which they understood the questions, interview length, and adding or removing questions. This was aimed at determining the instrument's quality as well as their perception of a possible adjustment in the data collection procedure.

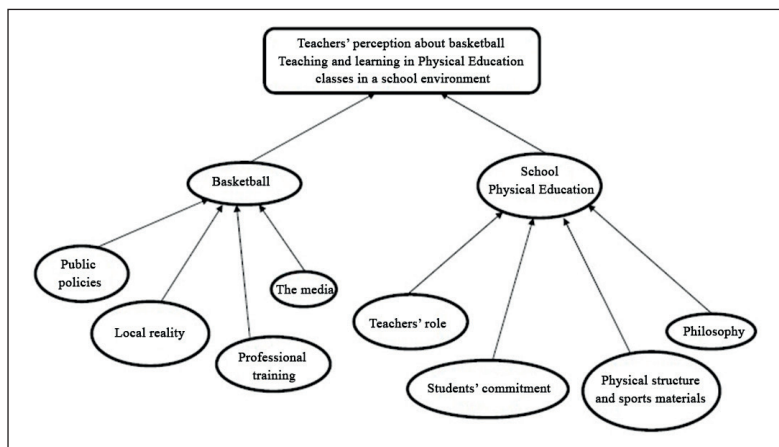
3 METHOD

Through transcripts, the information collected was subjected to content analysis by NVivo 10 – software specifically designed to verify data qualitatively. An interpretative analysis of the results was subsequently performed based on our theoretical framework, in order to obtain percentages of occurrence and frequency of results. Based on the procedure presented by Boyle *et al.* (2008), the following steps were used in the content analysis process:

- After being transcribed to a text file, data were read and organized.
- Data collected were properly coded in previously identified categories according to the topics related to teachers interviewed.

As mentioned earlier, this study was based on analytical categories, with the object of study as their core component. According to Bardin (2011) and Souza Junior *et al.* (2010), the analysis of these categories becomes relevant as a result of the presentation of what is to be investigated. The categories were branched as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Model to identify analytical categories to know the object of study



Source: (BARDIN, 2011; SOUZA JUNIOR *et al.*, 2010)

4 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

To guarantee respondents' anonymity, their respective names were replaced by a P code followed by the interview number, for instance P1, P2 and so on.

Of teachers who completed the questionnaire, 46 taught in public schools (76.7%), while 11 respondents (18.3%) work in private schools. Also, of teachers participating in the study, 3 taught in both public and private schools (5%). Respondents working in the public network belonged to two groups: 33 (72%) were municipal schools' employees while 13 (28%) worked at state schools.

About the education of teachers interviewed, "specialists" (postgraduates) were 48.4% while graduates were 38.3% and masters were 13.3%.

Besides characterization of the sample, another category associated with the object of the study was analyzed. The results, with the frequency of answers related to that category, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 – Frequency of answers

CATEGORIES	FREQUENCY	%
Teachers' role	48	80
Media	10	16.6
Local reality	9	15
Curriculum planning	8	13.3
Physical structure and sports materials	6	10
Public policies	5	8.3
Students' commitment	5	8.3
Methodological guidelines	4	6.6
Continued education	4	6.6

Source: Data from authors' research

Forty eight respondents (80%) underscored the importance of teachers as mediators between students and Physical Education contents, specifically basketball. For participants, teaching is the main foundation to construct knowledge and promote stimuli that facilitate students' whole development. As for basketball teaching and learning, teachers' responsibility was seen as essential for the process.

Teachers must not neglect that sport; they have to promote adjustments to ensure it is practiced (P3).

Nevertheless, it appears that sometimes Physical Education teachers do not have affinity with a particular content so they do not consider students' needs in order to provide them with diverse motor experiences (LEITE; SAMPAIO, 2012). Through their knowledge and educational activities, considering this scenario, teachers must raise students' awareness that basketball practice can not only promote its learning, but also provide satisfaction, better quality of life and other factors that will contribute to their overall development.

So people sometimes find ways not to work on certain contents. Some professionals say: "I don't like basketball" so I don't work with it. I don't have to love it, I have to do it the best I can! I have the material, I have space available, I have students who like it. (P11)

According to participants' observations, based on teachers' actions, Physical Education can allow a first contact with basketball, and perhaps trigger student's identification with it at that very moment. According to Vianna and Lovisolo (2009), failure to do so is a mistake, even considering the inconsistencies and inadequacies present in sports in general.

Ten teachers (16.66%) mentioned low participation of the media due to the few broadcasts in open TV channels and news press involving basketball and its top athletes as an obstacle to its development in Brazil. According to them, that hampers basketball's massification in the country and hence the discovery of talent.

What we see is that basketball in Brazil is not encouraged, perhaps not as much as futsal, football or even volleyball. That makes students not live culturally with basketball so often. (P4)

Television viewers establish a connection with sport's reality through broadcasts, which can bring them closer to certain sports. However, that approximation can be understood in two ways. Firstly, as a relationship with sport, it is presented superficially, with the clear intention of meeting the socio-economic interests of a hegemonic minority, which only entails the construction of meanings and reproduction of movement techniques based on what is presented by the media (KUNZ, 2009). The second way of approximation might be through a critical analysis involving all perspectives on sport, such as collective participation, building values, meanings, its practice to improve quality of life, among others. Therefore, sport – basketball – inclusion as a content in Physical Education classes represents the possibility for students' effective participation in it as well as the appreciation of those who make moves rather than just the movements made (RODRIGUES; DARIDO, 2008).

Media participation (or absence) in basketball massification was also associated by respondents to the notorious preference for broadcasting football matches, particularly by open TV channels, where there is a disproportionate presence of football over other sports. That scenario is possibly due to market interests involved in broadcasting, as previously mentioned – besides football's popularity in Brazil.

Nine participants (15%) explained the modest development of basketball by the reality of Volta Redonda, as well as the low importance given to Physical Education in that context. Justifications are the focus on other sports, the methodology used by teachers, absence of basketball as content in Physical Education classes, lack of incentive by the municipal government to the practice and the establishment of competitive teams, and the lack of Physical Education teachers with a history associated with basketball.

Regarding the issues that, according to the research subjects, involve the reality of Volta Redonda, some considerations shall be made. Firstly, the support offered by state or private bodies to other sports in the city cannot be considered excessive. Currently, Volta Redonda's teams play regional, national and international competitions in football, volleyball, swimming, rugby, trampoline and badminton. Some of those exist more as a result of the effort and dedication of some professionals than actual support to their projects – whether financial, material or through publicity. As for basketball, even though the city has several places suitable for its systematic practice, there is no mobilization aimed at its massification, team building, and participation in competitions, or government actions, regardless of projects linked to the sports mentioned above, which, according to Werle (2010), characterizes the absence of actions aimed at understanding and appreciating a sport.

On the teaching-learning methodology employed by teachers for basketball, there was early specialized training, that is, the use of procedures aimed at specialized sports practice when children are not yet properly prepared, aiming at short-term results (LEITE; SAMPAIO, 2012; MARQUES., 2004; MENEZES *et al*, 2014).

Places where basketball is practiced, where there is demand for that sport, adopt such an intensive work, so forceful that the child loses interest in it over time due to the high demand for immediate results. Then comes a period where there should be demand for better performance, and they don't want it anymore. I see that in Volta Redonda! (P10)

For Menezes *et al*. (2014), even if a Physical Education teacher has a structured concept about processes that avoid early specialization, on several occasions this may be conflicting with the field of practical intervention and also with management's little knowledge about Physical Education and its particularities, which may cause some pressure on teachers. In that case, teachers' choice of the most appropriate methodology to meet students' motor and cognitive needs becomes relevant.

Regarding basketball's absence as content in Physical Education classes and the few Physical Education teachers with a history in sports associated with that content, its importance should be seen as a pedagogical practice and, since it is the school environment, it must be worked comprehensively to enable students' contact with all opportunities related to its development (RODRIGUES; DARIDO, 2008). As for Physical Education teachers, even if they had no previous experience with basketball, knowledge acquisition is essential to allow applying contents in their classes through training courses, improvement or research. Sporting experience is an important ally for good professional performance, but it cannot be seen as a *sine qua non* for applying certain contents in class.

From the perspective of eight participants (13.33%), it is difficult to have a curricular plan that addresses students' needs as a reference – not only motor or technician ones, but also intellectual and social needs (MENDES; AZEVÊDO, 2010). That is seen as a detrimental factor for Physical Education's contribution to basketball teaching and learning.

I have a lot of difficulty with curriculum and progression. We usually work on some content; in public schools there is what is called a prerequisite, we work on that and add something. But you see the prerequisite in 7th year, 8th year and you realize that it's pretty much the same in 6th year. There is no progression. (P19)

Even though there is a curriculum plan for public schools in Volta Redonda, the speech above shows doubts about its effectiveness. To Pereira and Mendes (2010), a change in curriculum organization clashes with the principles and paradigms of those who are part of the school system. The authors note that strategies used to develop a curriculum that addresses the aspirations of the school community are not always appropriate to the goals that were defined.

Regarding conditions of the physical structure and the quality (and quantity) of sports equipment available for Physical Education

classes, six teachers (10%) mentioned the lack of sports equipment, especially balls, and the precariousness of sports facilities in their schools.

What I realize is that, with regard to equipment, we find it difficult to work on basketball. For example, I worked with basketball without a backboard and without a ball, which was replaced by a volleyball and a bucket (P3).

Such testimony about the physical structure and materials available for Physical Education classes raises reflection about two issues. Firstly, the conditions for Physical Education teachers to carry out a job that, at least in its design, aims to be efficient. Furthermore, the extent to which, given the circumstances, it is possible to perceive school Physical Education as a fertile field for the development of a sport like basketball. Note that these questions are not intended to give up on a Physical Education that provides students with the opportunity to experiment with a wide variety of alternative materials, the practice limited only to the sport's court or mainly to contact with a sport not only according to the parameters set as the "correct technique", but experiencing the many different ways that sports can be viewed – and reviewed – for example, through playfulness and based on values such as cooperation and loyalty. Rather, it intends to encourage the discussion about the relevance ascribed to School Physical Education as a curriculum component.

With regard to public policies for students' sports practice, five teachers (8.33%) see a lack of concrete actions to plan the development of sports. According to them, that view covers local, regional and national levels.

Now, if you don't have a policy, if it is not a government priority, whether it is municipal, state or federal, unfortunately nothing will advance, nothing. If there is no support, no desire, no willingness by those who can do it, I won't be the one to change anything about it. (P43)

As a social right, sports practice is a right of each person and, consequently, it is the State's duty to promote its development (CUI; SU, 2012; MENDES; AZEVÊDO, 2010). Public policies geared to that issue should be in line with the reality of each community, thus preventing results that favor personal interests to the detriment of collective gains, overbilling scandals, advantages, and impunity (WERLE, 2010).

There is an understanding that public policies should aim primarily at non-formal sports practice, in order to avoid reproducing the sports system that favors selection and exclusion (GUIRALDELLI JUNIOR, 2001; KUNZ, 2009; MENDES; AZEVÊDO, 2010; STIGGER, 2009). Nevertheless, according to Guiraldelli Junior (2001), Brazil's policy for Physical Education and sports practice has the above mentioned features, with prevailing economic interests to which sport is subordinate.

During the interviews, five teachers (8.33%) mentioned students' lack of commitment to the development of basketball in school. Those teachers see what they call students' "lack of interest", driven by the motivation to participate in other activities that are not mentioned in the statements.

Well, I see this issue of their disposition. I think there's a gap there. I think the process is compromised because student's have no disposition. They do it, but they don't do their best. They don't have that innate interest to apply themselves specifically to basketball. They have other realities that they like better; they do it only out of obligation. (P12)

That interest observed by teachers is often motivated by elements linked to the pleasure of participating in a sports activity, the development of skills or, in more specific issues, as a means for social mobility (JANUÁRIO *et al.*, 2012; MENEZES *et al.*, 2014). For Betti and Liz (2003), there is a clear influence of motivations toward sport in Physical Education classes in accordance with a sport-based approach, since students perceive sport as a fundamental

need since they release energy, reduce stress, known themselves better by practicing it, thus developing their relationship with themselves and the environment. Barkoukis *et al.* (2010) interpret students' behavior as a result of the conjunction of their capacity, the environment and their needs.

However, students' lack of commitment mentioned by teachers may be associated with lack of motivation caused by decreased interest in participating in group activities, the lack of need to improve in the specific technique of a sport like basketball, or the absence of targets to be met in the context in which this investigation took place. Januário *et al.* (2012) state that students' lack of commitment to sports practice might be linked to the population's demographic characteristics, for example, socioeconomic status, age, cultural characteristics, ethnicity, among other variables.

Four teachers (6.66%) pointed out the need to define actions to be implemented in order to establish consistency in the development of basketball as a content of Physical Education classes. According to teachers who addressed the question, these actions are based on the collective construction of a methodology that aims at defining how basketball should be applied – from school to national teams. The methodological principles for increasing Basketball in Physical Education classes that were mentioned are based on the construction of a line of action linked to standardization of the teaching of that sport, without downplaying Physical Education's role as a curriculum component (AKTOP; KARAHAN, 2012).

I think we're still searching for an identity, we still lack a course of action, how we want to play and make this style of playing get to schools, through the federations, confederation, leagues, etc., so that we, teachers, work out this way to play basketball in Brazil. (P2)

As for guidelines aimed at creating a set of actions for teaching and learning basketball, Xianjiang *et al.* (2012) consider that the process should be consistent with the social, economic and

political context in which it appears. Therefore, methodological guidelines to promote basketball demand understanding public and private mechanisms aimed at education in a country where individual interests, misuse of public money, and the use of illicit means by (municipal, state and federal) officials to achieve certain advantages are endemic.

Thinking of basketball practiced with the same philosophy from schools to national teams may be a viable proposal as long as goals focused on collective results and the role of Physical Education prevail. Therefore, school is perceived as a space for sport massification, strengthening harmony between basketball practice and students' whole education (XIANJIANG *et al.*, 2012). The successful construction of this course of action can only be achieved by ensuring access to basketball practice for everyone, regardless of issues such as gender, race or social status.

Survey participants expressed their views on the continuing education of PE teachers. Three respondents (5%) criticized it by saying they considered that recently graduated teachers leave Physical Education School with information on the various knowledge areas. However, respondents see that most of those teachers do not seek continuing education specializing in basketball, whether through specific courses or by following the work of more experienced professionals.

The study by Pereira and Hunger (2003) indicates that a possible solution to improve the reality above is to offer possibilities for teacher's continuing education. As mentioned earlier, specialization courses and research are crucial since college does not aim at training coaches who will work for results in competitions. However, even if the experiences and knowledge acquired in extension courses contribute to the development of basketball, it is necessary to understand Physical Education's role in that context – which is to treat sport as body expression, always respecting it as a class content.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The study sought to investigate teachers' perception about basketball teaching and learning in Physical Education classes in schools of Volta Redonda.

Participants' statements allowed identifying the reality of basketball development not only as class content, but also as a dimension which goes beyond school boundaries, where sport plays a significant role in society. Considerations about media behavior and implementation of public policies are examples of how sport can foster discussions that transcend aspects associated only to the specific characteristics of each specific sport.

About the importance of Physical Education teachers' commitment to pedagogical practice, respondents consider teaching action as the framework to perceive students' needs. In the case of basketball, teachers, supported by this commitment, should provide students with the awareness of the practice of that sport as a path for their growth, besides the pleasure that contact with specific game situations can provide. Therefore, teachers should consider students' cultural characteristics among other conditions that may favor their commitment with the work done in Physical Education classes.

As for the methodological procedures to be used in class, teachers' will select appropriate actions to meet students' motor and cognitive needs. For their work to yield results oriented to massification, formation or promotion of the sport, managers' concern to offer physical, material and economic conditions for actions to develop becomes relevant. In this case, government participation is crucial as long as using sport as a condition to meet personal interests is not a priority.

Joint actions to create opportunities for basketball growth as content in Physical Education classes can be a path to describe its implementation in all contexts, although we should not give up on

the importance of the discipline in schools in favor of obtaining results in sports competitions. This study does not intend to consider performance sport as contrary to the principles of School Physical Education, but to understand it as a tool that can be used to create opportunities for students to build and understand values.

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