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Building Time Management Skills through the Teaching Practice Activity

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Abstract: Taking into account that time goes by very quickly and the efficiency of an activity depends on how time is used, the purpose of this study is to highlight the formation of students' ability to properly organise their time through activities related to the design and conduct of teaching practice lessons. The current study is based on the responses given by 181 male and female students aged 21-30 years who were engaged in the organisation and conduct of lessons within the professional training practice in school units under the guidance of coordinating teachers. Study participants completed, at the end of the teaching practice that took place between 1.10.2020 and 30.01.2021, a questionnaire where they presented information about how they had organised their time in conducting lessons. The research students attend professional training programmes for physical education teachers, physiotherapy and sports performance carried out in three university centres ("Vasile Alecsandri" University in Bacau, National University of Physical Education and Sport in Bucharest and University of Pitești). The questionnaire included 20 closed-ended questions. The conclusions highlight that during the teaching practice, due to the responsibilities derived from achieving the themes and operational objectives of the lessons, students have become aware of both the passage of time and the importance of making good use of it, which was accompanied by the formation of their time management skills.

Keywords: *training, time management skills, teaching practice, students.*

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Introduction

Although physical education, as a component of general education, has a reduced number of classes provided in the core curriculum for pre-university education, it must give young people the opportunity to efficiently adapt to contemporary society, with a focus on maintaining health, harmonious physical development, increasing exercise capacity, but also on time management and eliminating the stress caused by super-technology and the multiplication of social vices (alcoholism, smoking, physical and verbal violence, etc.). Taking into account that time goes by very quickly and the fact that the teacher and students have to achieve operational objectives related to time management during each lesson, we have found it necessary and appropriate to address this topic.

In the physical education lesson, the imminent passage of time requires the teacher to pay special attention to the development of moments, the achievement of planned actions, the execution of movements and the fulfilment of operational objectives. When talking about time management, reference is primarily made to the action that involves planning, organising and controlling the development of activities within a set period of time so that each moment is used rationally, efficiently and productively, and ends up with the fulfilment of objectives. An essential criterion underlying success consists in the way of approaching time. There are important differences between personal attributes and behavioural styles that leave their marks in this regard (Cole, 1993). Indeed, we do not manage time itself, but the activities carried out within a certain period manage the passage of our time. Time management is actually a personal process of structuring, programming, predicting the development of actions over time, and this repeated, controlled, analysed process eventually leads to the formation of useful, efficient time management skills. "Time management involves scheduling, anticipating and responding to actions in a planned and efficient manner" (Vasilescu & Țifrea, 2020, p. 568). The efficiency of time consumption involves the rational and productive use of the timeframe according to the pace, resources and goal pursued in the precise accomplishment of the activities. Ancona et al. (2001) believe that time is a powerful tool in assessing organizational phenomena, and Misra and McKean (2000) say that time management skills have been identified as having a "buffering" effect on stress. In another research, Kearns and Gardiner (2007) state that time management skills are also an important indicator of higher academic performance and lower levels of stress in higher education. Adams and Blair (2019) claim that higher education has

the mission to develop academic skills, for instance to enhance critical thinking and educational frameworks through teaching, feedback and access to high-quality resources.

Building the competencies necessary to achieve the themes of the lessons and fulfilling the operational objectives that ensure the efficiency of the activity depends on how students learn throughout their studies to organise and especially carry out their activities within the planned timeframe. According to Rață (2007), time passes whether the action to achieve the goal has begun or not, it runs out irreversibly and often uselessly; in the physical education and sport lesson, organising each time sequence and tracking the way in which tasks are accomplished by self-control finally leads to performing the activities in due time. This also contributes to building the ability to organise and carry out activities in time units.

Time is measured by the duration that corresponds to the temporal extent during which an action, a phenomenon, an event, an activity, an exercise or something else takes place. Time is the one that ensures success in life if usefully consumed. The strategy for a great organization of the time during the activities, lessons is based on creating a project that follows a purpose and a goal which are concretely formulated.

The strategy for conducting the physical education and sport lesson is based on an organisational approach that involves both the design and the organisation and management of the activity in order to achieve the established objective or objectives.

Prioritizing different tasks; setting clear, challenging and proximal goals with deadlines; planning and scheduling their work day and monitoring goal progress might be good advice for students to increase perceived control of time and decrease stress. Such strategies might be taught in different ways at institutions of higher education. Time management trainings for freshmen or including time management instructions in other courses, especially where long-lasting projects such as writing a paper or preparing for an exam have to be realized, might be two examples (Hafner et al., 2015).

The organisational art that students develop during their teaching practice requires work, guidance and control. A good strategy is characterized by predicting the duration of each action, establishing their duration, as well as by flexibility, and is based on combining all the components that ensure optimal efficiency in a well-established time structure.

"Time management encompasses the various forethought, performance, and post-performance processes through which students self-

regulate when and for how long they engage in the activities deemed necessary for reaching their academic goals" (Wolters and Brady, 2020).

Meeuwisse, Born and Severiens in the 2013 article provides an example "students who participate in several activities simultaneously (e.g., studying, working, membership of a sorority, sports), and who therefore lead busy lives, probably need to set goals and prioritise all the time. These students probably have good time management skills that could be beneficial with regard to their study. However, despite their excellent time management skills, the time all these different activities take may keep these students from spending the necessary time studying, with negative consequences for their academic performance. In groups of students with less extensive lives, a similar excellent level of time management skills may lead to higher academic performance. More generally, the impact that time management behaviour has on academic performance may be different for different students under different situations or circumstances."

The *purpose* of this study was to highlight the formation of time management skills in physical education students following their participation in teaching practice for 4 months (1 October 2020 - 25 January 2021), with a frequency of 3 classes per week.

The research *objectives* were: to develop and to apply a questionnaire on the formation of managerial competencies regarding the time management of the students from three universities.

The research *hypotheses* are based on the following assumptions:

- lesson design activities for the teaching practice contribute to building time management skills;

- the level of children's acquisitions and the pursued themes are priorities within the lessons conducted by students during their teaching practice;

- managerial skills can be built, can be learned during the teaching practice of students by respecting the timeframes and a good organisation of the classroom during physical education lessons carried out in the three university centres.

Methodology

The research subjects were 181 students (out of the 209 who fully completed the questionnaire) aged between 21 and 30 years. They were recruited from three university centres as follows: "Vasile Alecsandri" University in Bacau, Faculty of Movement, Sports and Health Sciences (N = 64), National University of Physical Education and Sport in Bucharest (N = 74) and University of Pitești, Faculty of Science, Physical Education and

Informatics (N = 43). Students responded to a questionnaire that was sent to them online.

All the participants gave us their informed consent for participating in the study. They were also informed of the withdrawal possibility, with no further consequences.

The data presented in this paper result from the processing of the correct responses given by the 181 students to the standardised questionnaire that was designed to assess the time management methods used during a physical education and sport lesson. Participant sampling was performed using a non-probabilistic strategy (convenience sampling). The sample included 93 (51.4%) female students and 88 (48.6%) male students aged between 21 and 30 years.

The tool used for student assessment was a questionnaire consisting of 20 closed-ended questions. The questionnaire highlights the ability of students to integrate into the professional training activity and cope with its requirements, but especially the formation of time management skills during the 50 minutes of conducting physical education lessons as part of their teaching practice. The questionnaire was anonymous to encourage the participants' openness and sincerity. The research directions pursued through the questionnaire were focused on:

students' concern for, perception of and satisfaction with the support provided by the teaching practice in their professional training towards the formation and improvement of time management skills for the good conduct of a physical education and sport class (items 1, 2, 3, 20);

the importance of factors to be taken into account in the design of a physical education and sport lesson (including efficient time management) (items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10);

the level of development of the time management ability during the teaching practice.

In data processing, we used the SPSS program version 2020 to calculate the absolute and percentage frequencies for the response options related to items 1, 3, 6 and 12-20, as well as the mean rank values resulting from the prioritisation of response options that students had as tasks for items 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

Results and Discussion

Using the SPSS data processing program, we analysed the responses given by participants to the items of the questionnaire that was aimed at tracking time management practices during physical education and sport lessons but also time management skills and abilities, which represented the

focus of suggestions and guidance received by students throughout their teaching practice.

In a study conducted in Turkey on a sample of 170 physical education and sport students, Gumusgul (2018) states that statistical analysis highlights that time management perception is different according to gender, saying that "male students can leave important works for the last minute comparing to female students" (p. 226). The level of participation of our students in the teaching practice classes was revealed by their responses to item 1 of the questionnaire they completed. Thus, 62.4% of students said they had participated in all teaching practice classes, while approximately 31% said they had participated in only half of the classes allocated to this practical subject. Therefore, the investigated sample showed a relatively good level of student participation in teaching practice activities.

Regarding student perception of the support provided by the teaching practice in their professional training towards the formation and improvement of time management skills for the good conduct of a physical education and sport class, the distribution of responses to item 20 of the questionnaire has highlighted that it represents very much for 62.4%, it is important to a large extent for 32.6%, while for 5%, it is important to a lesser extent (Figure 1).

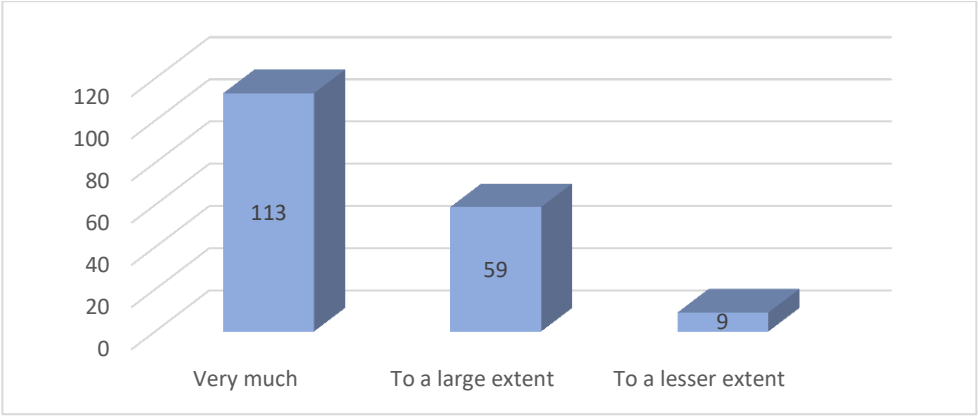


Figure 1. Student perception of the support provided by the teaching practice in their professional training towards the formation and improvement of time management skills for the good conduct of a physical education and sport class (item 20)

Source: Authors' own conception

As can be seen, students expressed a high level of satisfaction with the teaching practice as a source of support for the optimisation of their planning and time management skills within the professional training programmes in the field of Sport and Physical Education Science. Approximately 55% of the surveyed students stated that they always used to design the activities of a lesson before conducting physical education and sport classes (item 2). However, 41% of them took this aspect into account only sometimes, although it is very important for the teaching design process.

A factor closely related to the design of activities specific to a physical education and sport lesson involves pre-establishing the order of exercises to be approached with schoolchildren in order to optimise the time budget (item 3). Approximately 69% of the surveyed students stated that they always pre-established the order of exercises to be approached in a lesson, while 26% of them took this aspect into account only sometimes, despite its relevance for the optimisation of a lesson. After analysing the concepts of some notable authors, Rawi Juwanda et al. (2021) state that management is a process of planning, organising, mobilising and controlling the activity carried out in order to achieve pre-determined goals through other people.

The analysis of responses to items 1, 2, 3 and 20 reveals student perception and satisfaction with the fact that the teaching practice, through the activities carried out, represents a basic support especially for the formation of time management skills but also for their professional training, an issue that ensures the good conduct of the physical education lesson. These findings validate the first hypothesis according to which "lesson design activities for the teaching practice contribute to building time management skills".

Table 1 shows the mean rank values that students assigned to the factors operationalised through items 4, 5 and 7-10 of the questionnaire administered for data collection (statistical values are calculated with the help of SPSS). For the six items, students were asked to prioritise the factors in order of importance by assigning a rank from 1.00 to 3.00 (the closer the mean value of a rank is to 1.00, the greater the importance of the corresponding factor).

Table 1. Student assessments regarding the importance of factors to be taken into account when designing a physical education and sport lesson (including efficient time management)

Questionnaire items	Response options	Mean rank
4. Factors taken into account in the distribution of time allocated to a lesson	Level of children in the classroom	1.49
	Material resources	2.22
	Lesson themes	1.90
	Designing the lesson plan	1.76
5. Priorities set after establishing the theme/themes of a lesson	Setting the duration of each part of the lesson	2.02
	Selecting exercises for each part of the lesson	1.88
7. Factors taken into account in planning the time allocated to a lesson theme	Level of children in the classroom	1.40
	Number of children	1.94
	Material resources	2.39
8. Factors taken into account in establishing the duration of each part of the lesson	Lesson theme/themes	1.53
	Level of children in the classroom	1.64
	Number of children	2.51
9. Factors taken into account in choosing exercises for each part of the lesson	Lesson theme/themes	1.47
	Expected effects	2.40
	Level of children in the classroom	1.78
10. Factors taken into account in establishing the duration/number of repetitions for each exercise	Expected effects	1.55
	Level and number of children in the classroom	1.47
	Material resources	2.69

Source: Authors' own conception

The main factor (item 4) that students took into account in the distribution of time allocated to a lesson was the level of children's acquisitions and learning ability (mean rank = 1.49). Another factor taken into consideration by students in their time budget management was represented by the themes of physical education and sport lessons (mean rank = 1.90).

As for the priorities set after establishing the theme/themes of a lesson (item 5), the first place in descending order of importance went to designing the lesson plan (mean rank = 1.76), which was followed by the selection of exercises for each part of the lesson (mean rank = 1.88).

The level of children in the classroom was also at the top of the hierarchy of factors taken into account by students (item 7) in planning the time allocated to a lesson theme (mean rank = 1.40). The number of children in the classroom was in second place (mean rank = 1.94) regarding

its importance in relation to time management for teaching a theme during physical education and sport classes.

Item 8 including the theme/themes of a lesson was in the top of the factors that students took into account in setting the duration of each part of the lesson (mean rank = 1.53). This factor was closely followed by the dimension referring to the level of children in the classroom (mean rank = 1.64).

The theme/themes of a lesson (mean rank = 1.47) and the level of children (mean rank = 1.78) were in the first two positions as regards the importance given to it by students in relation to the design approach and/or the choice of appropriate exercises for each part of the lesson (item 9).

Regarding the factors that students considered when setting the duration of an exercise or the number of repetitions necessary for consolidation (item 10), the first two places in decreasing order of importance were taken by the level and number of children in the classroom (mean rank = 1.47) and the expected effects after performing the exercises (mean rank = 1.55).

The responses given by students to item 6 of the questionnaire revealed their tendency to set the necessary time for approaching each theme within a lesson. Approximately 61% of participants stated that they always took this factor into account when designing a lesson. However, 53.6% of the surveyed students said that they had only sometimes enough time to cover all the themes they had planned for a lesson. Another 5.5% said they never managed to fit within the planned timeframe.

Other authors are also concerned with the formation of useful time management skills during activities; thus, the research conducted by Abo El-Komsan and El-Gebaly (2010) highlights the effectiveness of "establishing a scale of managing the training process time" (p. 90), but also the fact that "the results indicated that the most related dimension to the total sum of time management scale was planning dimension with a coefficient correlation of 0.786" (p. 90).

From the analysis of all the above-mentioned factors, it can be seen that the level of children's acquisitions and learning ability (assessed by the responses to items 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10) as well as the themes pursued during lessons tend to occupy the first two positions in the hierarchy made by students starting from relevant factors for the teaching design process specific to a physical education and sport lesson. This finding validates the second hypothesis according to which "the level of children's acquisitions and the pursued themes are priorities within the lessons conducted by students during their teaching practice".

The responses to item 12 of the questionnaire were consistent with those given by students to the next item. Thus, 68% of students stated that they often found it difficult to fit within the timeframe they had planned. Also, 55.8% of the study participants stated they had only sometimes enough time to cover all the themes they had planned for a lesson (item 13).

Students' experience in planning a physical education and sport lesson is at the beginning of the road. An important role of the teaching practice is to strengthen students' skills and abilities to imagine and correctly design, in didactic terms, a teaching-learning, consolidation or evaluation lesson. Teaching practice classes offer students the opportunity to model their attitude towards the critical analysis of both a teaching project and their own performance in the classroom. In this regard, the responses to item 14 of the questionnaire highlighted a proactive attitude in the analysed sample of students. Thus, 58% of them said that they always analysed their way of solving the tasks proposed for the physical education and sport class. Another 36% stated that they performed such an assessment and analysis only sometimes. A critical analysis allows students/physical education and sport teachers to discover the factors contributing to their failure to fit within the timeframe and control them in the design of future lessons. A percentage of 47.5% of the surveyed students said they always made the effort to understand the aspects that had contributed to their failure to fit within the time budget allocated to a lesson (item 15). Another 45.3% reported performing this analysis only sometimes.

An essential criterion underlying success consists in the way of approaching time. There are important differences between personal attributes and behavioural styles that leave their marks in this regard (Cole, 1993), and Sabouri et al. (2013) consider it necessary to examine the relationship between time management and the training process and decision-making quality. In this research, professional honesty and a critical attitude towards one's own teaching performance were reflected in the personal responsibility that 47% of the surveyed students attributed to their failure to fit within the timeframe planed for a lesson (item 16). Another 45% of students attributed their failure in terms of time budget management to other disruptive factors (item 17).

Manev and Jakimovski (2017) believe that knowledge management in successful sports activities can be associated with sustainability, continuity and the achievement of long-term competitive results in sport. A worrying finding related to the efficiency of the teaching process was that 56.4% of the students who participated in the current study stated that they had never managed to carry out the planned instructive-educational activities in due

time (item 18), while 40.3% had only sometimes succeeded in achieving this performance (item 19).

From the analysis of all the aforementioned aspects, it can be seen that the level of time management skills (assessed by the responses to items 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19) is of concern to students and raises their awareness. All these findings lead to the idea that the hypothesis according to which "managerial skills can be built, can be learned during the teaching practice of students by respecting the timeframes and a good organisation of the classroom during physical education lessons carried out in the three university centres" is validated.

Conclusion

To improve their skills and abilities related to the design of a lesson, students need support from teachers who coordinate academic subjects addressing the didactics of physical education, sport and psychomotor activities or teaching practice, but also from experienced classroom teachers. This need was highlighted by the prioritisation that the surveyed students made at the item requiring them to indicate the solution they used when they encountered difficulties in designing a teaching project. Thus, the first place in descending order of the frequency of choosing the solution was taken by the request for support from the teacher coordinating the teaching practice (mean rank = 1.31). In second place, we find the support requested from a colleague, and in the last place, the use of the Internet as a source of inspiration. It would be preferable for students to use less the sources posted on the Internet to overcome the difficulties encountered in designing a lesson plan. The undesirable phenomenon of searching, identifying and fully taking over a lesson plan in an uncritical and non-personalised way is well known.

In conclusion, lesson design activities to be conducted within the teaching practice contribute to building time management skills, and the level of children's acquisitions following the completion of proposed themes are priorities pursued by students. Managerial skills can be built, can be learned during the teaching practice of students by respecting the timeframes and a good organisation of the classroom during physical education lessons carried out in the three university centres.

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