

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Appreciation of the formative experiences of cooperating teachers and their use during practical training in physical education

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The Cooperating Teacher is recognized as a central figure in the initial training of teachers and the preparation for the exercise of this role has been sparse and understood as a matter of great importance. The appreciation of the formative experiences is an important process for the construction of personal conceptions of the Cooperating Teacher in Physical Education. This study tried to unveil relations training path of the Cooperating Teacher with their current conceptions about their role in the formation of student-trainee and the organization of the stage. Fifteen Cooperating Teacher were interviewed, from the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle and secondary education, selected on the basis of their teaching experience and experience for guidance. A model of open-response surveys was used, before data introduction at NVivo, for qualitative analysis. Trainers, training models, components of training, practical training or experience are related to current concepts of formation of Cooperating Teacher from an evaluation of its usefulness, coherence and consistency of the conceptual basis of his speech and the direction and intensity of affective charge established.

**Key-words:** Physical Education; Supervised Teaching; Formative Experiences.

## INTRODUCTION

The internship is a transition year between the university world and the world of school, marked by a number of ambiguities in roles and relationships, which lead the trainee to experience all the contradictions and ambivalent feelings that result from the duplication of roles teacher and student.

This situation creates for the trainee, a conflict of identity which brings discomfort and insecurity in their lives from the stage. However, students' trainees value highly the role of cooperating teacher, because it identifies the figure by which they can, eventually, manage to overcome these difficulties, from a technical standpoint, educational and as socio-professional point of view (Calderhead and Shorrock, 1997).

The appreciation of the formative experiences is an important process in the construction of personal conceptions of cooperating teachers on the performance and impact of their role (Rikard and Lou-Veal, 1996; Tjeerdsma, 1998). Therefore, this study of the formative experiences of recovery internalized by cooperating teachers begins naturally with the development of their own initial training (Clarke, 2006).

It is conceivable that the differences in the initial models (structure and content of curricula) and differences in conceptual orientations (diversity of values, objectives, contents and methods that integrate the training programs for teachers) who have experienced, and cooperating teachers who ran their own career paths and traditions can bring out differences that reflect guidance in the field of philosophy and pedagogical convictions offshoots (Smith, 2007; Stuart, 2000).

These conclusions agree Varma et al. (2010) study. Therefore, the challenge of teachers' learning in a constr-

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activist environment are integrated into the elementary science methods course, not only developing an understanding of inquiry-based science instruction, but also an appreciation developing for the benefits of teaching and learning science through inquiry in a constructivist environment (Brookes, 2010).

Thus, this study sought to inquire about professional life histories that the cooperating teacher remembered as the most influential in their professional knowledge and how the journey was being made of this knowledge from the sources that they point out, to their use as trainers of teachers. It is assumed that the way each conceives cooperating teacher monitoring, the formative experiences of student interns, is influenced by their own formative experiences and the value they attach to these experiences (Meyers et al., 2010). As seen in Tate et al. (2008), supervisors of teacher interns play a key role in preparing new teaching force.

This study aims to characterize the views of cooperating teachers on the objectives of the aging process, the concerns about the initial difficulties and shortcomings of the students on the type of relationships with them and about the ideal profile for the performance function of orientation training. More specifically:

- Understand how they were perceived influences that have suffered over the cooperating teacher of their own training;
- Know what sources of knowledge and privileged to have served, either within their own training (basic training) or in its additional training;
- Know how valued and self-acquired knowledge was used for the performance of his duties as cooperating teacher;
- Characterize the differences between cooperating teacher with different teaching experience and guidance;
- Uncover relationships training path of the cooperating teacher with their current conceptions about their role in the formation of student-trainee and the organization of the stage.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study involved fifteen cooperating teachers, selected according to their teaching experience and respective experience for guidance. The sample was divided in groups, according to the corresponding specific characteristics: the group of short teaching experience, under 10 years of education and less than 3 years of guidance; and a group of long teaching experience with more than 10 years of teaching. According to the second criterion, the group of teachers with long experience of teaching was subdivided in other two groups: short experience orientation, at least 5 years of guidance; and long experience orientation, with over 7 years of guidance.

For the collecting of information, the open-response

was used, drawing structured interviews. The questions sought, in the first block, uncover how each cooperating teacher: characterized their model of teaching practice; features and recalls her school and faculty supervisor; and sources of knowledge helped.

In the second block, the study tried to reflect how each one influence in the formation; and add suggestions that considers necessary to improve the formation.

The third block of questions contemplated issues related with: the perception of each student-trainee has about himself/herself (self-evaluation); the organizational and administrative aspects that each one thinks are most important in that stage and suggestions for modifying the current stage (Ferguson, 2011).

Care was taken to account for all study participants that there was no intention in evaluative activities related to this work, and the confidentiality would be respected, therefore, the names would be encoded. For viability increasing, the interviews were recorded in a quiet and reserved environment around 60 min.

About the information analysis, the responses of each cooperating teacher were transcribed and entered into the computer program for qualitative analysis NVivo and it was adopted as a separate line for registration. The grill took tailored encoding of theoretical references, the conceptual framework of guidelines described by Feiman-Nemser (1990), and sources of knowledge described by Grossman (1991).

The first phase of analysis consisted of coding the text of the interviews according to a grid produced from the conceptual framework. The encoded material sought to detect the key ideas, key words and contradictions in the statements of each cooperating teacher.

## RESULTS

Next show will be the prevailing ideas of the cooperating teacher as a function of the nine key issues that have been considered in this paper: teacher training, cooperating teachers, supervisors, students-trainees, colleagues, practice, academic training, self study and continuous education.

The formative experience of cooperating teachers is diversified. It appears that the long experience orientation lived experiences of all professional training, in an empirical way. Generally, this model was considered insufficient and amputated part in his practice because, when it existed, was perceived as little enriching, this is similar to the finding of Allen et al. (2010) and Fernandez-Balboa, (2010).

In relation to the models and exercise professional stage integrated evaluation, is in almost all cases, very positive. Also two of short experience orientations turned professional after this system. In contrast, all three short teaching experience took his second stage the integrated model.

The older cooperating teachers with long experience orientation in one stage in the physical education model evaluate the experience as positive. In the case of cooperating teachers with short experience orientation the experience is considered slightly positive or even bad. The *modus operandi* of the specimen stage is cited as responsible for success or inefficiency of training, covering reasons ranging from the tasks to be undertaken by a trainee, to distance the parent institution which the internship takes place, blaming the fact that little support received.

The advisors are cited as the main source of knowledge, this view, although not widespread across the three groups of respondents. This might be one of the reasons why the majority of respondents consider the supervised practice teaching in physical education is a positive or very positive moment of their training. This study contradicts the results presented by Bertram (1997), which shows that, the main source of knowledge is the theoretical part, directly influenced by the curriculum.

Recognition of the importance of the positive role of the supervisor is very evident in the characterizations that, nearly all respondents have their respective advisors. It is noteworthy to mention the concept of support towards the guiding framework which support the definition of the route guidance, based on the problems encountered in the process.

In a much less spare than might be expected (Lynn, 2007) the supervisors are defined by their roles, their characteristics, their dimensions, highlighting its support role in a personal, professional and emotional way.

There is however, respondents that also consider that their advisors as inexperienced and not very knowledgeable, pointing problems related to lack of scientific knowledge and relationship problems as responsible for their poor performance as mentors. The long experience orientation cooperating teachers never refer to student-trainee as a source of knowledge. This may indicate an insufficient culture of reflexivity as reflection in action in general. This issue is present, either in education or in professional field, likewise as presented by Gallagher (2000).

The category "Practice" is mentioned by four respondents, and all refer to their learning experience as responsible for the knowledge acquired and used for the act of guiding, both as a starting point and practical situations. The practice is of vital importance as a means of professional development (Garner and Bailey, 2010). The personal involvement, translated by a sense of self-implication, associated with the experience of learning in action, justified the pre-professional experiences (Pintrich, 1990).

## DISCUSSION

The data collected allows appreciating the fact that, the

cooperating teachers put particular importance to different sources of knowledge and experience in their training. Trainers, training models, components of training, practical training or experience are related to current concepts of formation of cooperating teachers from an evaluation of its usefulness, coherence and consistency of the conceptual basis of his speech and the direction and intensity of affective charge established. In the case of cooperating teachers with short teaching experience high influence is give to professional sources of knowledge in this very stage, likewise to their mentors and supervisors of the faculty.

Trying to look for these fifteen cooperating teachers, this study conclude that a good teacher and good teaching are the result of accumulated experience, stemming from knowledge of the facts, concepts and procedures that characterize the physical education. The teaching practice was the most deserving referenced, so a more careful eye on the course of education in initial training (academic and professional) of a teacher.

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