THE STUDENT ATTENTION IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES

Petrica, João[1]

Introduction

Two types of information contribute to describe Teaching and what involves it, the visible information, as behaviours or teaching strategies, and those that we can qualify as invisible, as values, attitudes, thoughts, mechanisms of decision taking, or reflection of the diferent actors of teaching (Pieron, 1996).Between these factors we can also include the student attention.

For wittrock (1986), the recent studies about the processes of thought of the pupils bring a distinct perspective to the theories about the effect of the teacher in the learning process, to the development of teaching theories, and to the project of teaching analysis.

Therefore, in the direction to look for to know better the teaching process, to the level of what we cannot see: the thought, and particulary, the thought of those to which learning concerns, we direct our study for the attention of the pupils, because, in accordance with Singer (1986), how much bigger it will be the attention of the person, better it will be its motor performance in PE & sport sciences.

In fact, it seems not to be doubt that, in education, if the pupils will not be with attention to what they are doing, their learning will leave inevitably compromised.

Problem

The basic purpose of this research was to know what students were thinking during Physical Education Classes.

Methods

For data collection we used the ATEST-PE (Petrica 2003, 2010), an instrument with a single question of closed and alternative reply, that included almost all the reply possibilities, so that it could be filled in the fastest way. For its implementation, four different moments of the lesson were defined and after a beep or buzzer students filled out the questionnaire, interrupting the class the less possible.

The questionnaire was applied to 1117 pupils, 10-13 years old, in the 144 classes observed to 48 pré-service physical Education Teachers.

Results

The analysis of the questionnaires allowed us to get a global image of this aspect of the thought of the pupils.

The total number of indications, in all the records, allowed to average per episode, which resulted, for transformation into percentages, in the percentage for each item and, in turn, by conjugation, allowed to find the percentage for the respective variable.

[1] Coordinator Professor of Polytechnic Institute of Castelo Branco - Portugal
Higher School of Education
Rua Prof. Doutor Faria de Vasconcelos
6000-076 Castelo Branco – Portugal
j.petrica@ese.ipcb.pt

Variable	Sub-variable	Description	nº	$\bar{X}$	%	%
Attention to the Behavior	Teacher	In what the teacher was doing	675	169	13,7	
	Colleagues	In what my colleagues were doing	343	86	7,0	20,7
Attention to the Information	Listen	In what the teacher was saying	922	231	18,7	
	Connect	In what my colleague said	196	49	4,0	22,7
Attention to the Task	To perform	In what I'm going to do	606	152	12,3	
	In progress	In what I'm doing	1069	267	21,7	
	performed	In what I did	324	81	6,6	40,6
Affective Attention	Colleagues	In my Colleague	127	32	2,6	
	Teachers	In my teacher	77	19	1,6	
	Friends	In my friends	95	24	1,9	
	Family	In my family	40	10	0,8	6,9
Out of Task Attention	In Class	In what my colleague did to me	80	20	1,6	
		In what I'm going to do to my colleague	49	12	1,0	
	Outside the	In what I'm going to do in the interval	141	35	2,9	
	Classroom	In a computer game	18	5	0,4	5,9
Attention on other Things	Other	Another think	161	40	3,3	3,3

Table – Frequencies, average and percentage of response per item, sub-variable and variable on the students' attention.

As we can see, the chosen answer indicates that students say that they are thinking about what they are doing (21,7% indications), associated with attention on the task. The second answer selected is the one in which students said they were thinking about what teacher was saying (18.7% indications), associated with attention to the information given. The third most chosen answer was the response that said they were thinking to what the teacher was doing (13,7% of indications), associated with attention to the teacher demonstration and the fourth most chosen answer is referred to be with attention to the task that they were going to do (12.3% indications), associated with attention on the task.

If we add to these, the values of the response that they were thinking to what they did (6.6%), we can conclude that students are focused on the more important aspects of the physical education class, attention to the task and attention to information provided by the teacher, because they account for 73% of the indications.

Using the mean percentage value of each variable we can obtain the profile of pupils' attention, which is not more than the graphical representation of the variables of attention through a horizontal bar graph

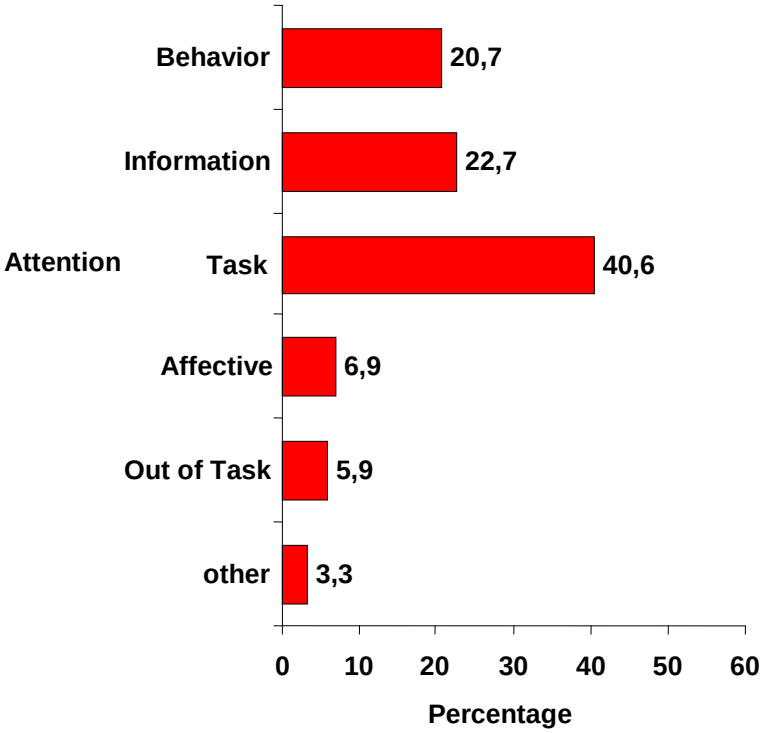

Figure – Profile of students' attention

The profile of the students' attention in Physical Education contributes to what we were saying because the attention to the task is a variable that assumes greater importance which represents a large proportion of the total students' attention (40%), followed by Attention to Information,This represents a much smaller portion but still important (22.7%), variables associated to the Success in Physical Education (Pieron, 1996).

Conclusion

Synthesizing what we could see about the student thought, more particularly, regarding to what they are thinking during Physical Education classes, we think that we can say that the students are primarily concerned with what they are doing, what they are going to do, or what they did, and although less, they are also with attention to information provided by the teacher or their peers, and are sometimes thinking about what their teacher and colleagues are doing, representing the affective thinking and the out of task thinking, a much smaller portion of their attention.
These results seem to be good news for the teaching of Physical Education and may be linked to the explanation of why the difficult students have greater success in this discipline than in the traditional ones of the classroom.

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