

# The Effective Role of Physical Education in Combating School Indiscipline: The “Sport Education” Didactic-pedagogical Model

## Il ruolo efficace dell’educazione fisica nel combattere l’indisciplina: Il modello pedagogico-didattico della “Sport Education”

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### ABSTRACT

The article examines a pedagogical intervention that was put into practice with students who faced exclusion from Physical Education classes because of their inadequate conduct in school. We conducted an experiment utilizing the Sport Education model as a means to combat indiscipline in a public educational institution. The primary goal of the research was to identify and comprehend potential modifications in the attitudes of students who were considered undisciplined. The study was grounded in action research principles and employed the focus group and questionnaire as data collection instruments. Sport Education holds the potential to facilitate a critical understanding and adoption of physical activity. The use of collective work as a pedagogical strategy may serve as an alternative approach to improve student behaviour, as long as mediation is implemented alongside the restoration of emotional connections between teachers and students. The issue of indiscipline remains complex and poses a challenge for educators. However, it is imperative to address the problem of excluding students from Physical Education classes due to disciplinary reasons.

L’articolo prende in esame un intervento pedagogico messo in pratica con studenti esclusi dalle lezioni di Educazione Fisica a causa del loro comportamento inadeguato a scuola. Abbiamo condotto un esperimento utilizzando il modello Sport Education come mezzo per combattere l’indisciplina in un istituto educativo pubblico. L’obiettivo principale della ricerca era identificare e comprendere le potenziali modifiche negli atteggiamenti degli studenti considerati indisciplinati. Lo studio è basato sui principi della ricerca-azione e ha impiegato il focus group e il questionario come strumenti di raccolta dati. Sport Education detiene il potenziale di facilitare una comprensione critica e l’adozione dell’attività fisica. L’uso del lavoro collettivo come strategia pedagogica può servire come approccio alternativo per migliorare il comportamento degli studenti, purché la mediazione sia implementata insieme al ripristino delle connessioni emotive tra insegnanti e studenti. La questione dell’indisciplina rimane complessa e rappresenta una sfida per gli educatori. Tuttavia, è imperativo affrontare il problema dell’esclusione degli studenti dalle lezioni di Educazione Fisica per motivi disciplinari.

#### KEYWORDS

Sport Education Model, Inadequate Conduct, Physical Activity; Secondary School; Didactic-Pedagogical Approach  
Modello della Sport Education, Condotta inadeguata, Attività fisica; Scuola secondaria; Approccio didattico-pedagogico

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## 1. Introduction

From the outset, it is worth noting that we have an understanding in which the primary social function of the school is to provide students with access to elaborated knowledge, i.e. scientific knowledge, and to socialize systematized knowledge (Saviani, 2003). However, the historical circumstances experienced in our nation have put the immediate realization of this function to the test. In other words, the prospect of transforming society through school education is facing significant challenges. As a hypothesis, we contend that the combination of socio-economic conditions has made the task of the school even more arduous. There are innumerable obstacles, which illustrates the intricate nature of educational work. In this sense, indiscipline has emerged with great vigour. The causes for the perpetuation of indiscipline are rooted in society and in the very constitution of education systems (Estrela, 1992; Kergoat, 2022). According to Aquino (1998), in order to conceptualize indiscipline, we must first define discipline, because depending on this concept, we can have quite different understandings. For the author, if we understand discipline as the

“behavior governed by a set of rules, indiscipline can be expressed in two ways: 1) rebellion against these rules; 2) ignorance of them. In the first case, indiscipline translates into a form of insolent disobedience; in the second, into chaotic behaviour and disorganized relationships” (Aquino, 1998, p. 10).

Indiscipline, in this context, refers to any action that conflicts with the regulations established within a given society. It is important to note that, in many cases, the individual is not aware that they are committing an act of indiscipline, which emphasizes the importance of the school in guiding and discussing this phenomenon with the entire school community (La Taille et al., 2013). Currently, indiscipline has been experienced in schools and is considered a major source of stress in interpersonal relationships at school. However, if this situation is analyzed in detail, indiscipline can be considered a great opportunity to reflect on the need for pedagogical and institutional advances in relation to the problem (García, 1999). It is valuable to recognize a recurring issue in educational institutions, especially in the context of Physical Education. In this particular scenario, we are addressing a form of normative exclusion, wherein students are excluded from classes due to their disruptive conduct within the school environment. Although this approach claims to have pedagogical intentions, it appears paradoxical to us and has become prevalent in secondary schools. The school, often, in the context of its management/pedagogical coordination, directs the exclusion of students from Physical Education classes as a form of punishment, given that it perceives a predilection on the part of these students for this curricular component (De Paula et al., 2015). It is evident that passing judgment on this attitude is not feasible, as it appears to unveil a certain sense of despair among teachers who are occasionally confronted with situations of violence. As mentioned

earlier, indiscipline is a multifaceted issue, influenced by various factors. However, it is difficult to believe that excluding students is a reasonable solution to this problem, particularly because it infringes upon their right to participate in Physical Education classes. After witnessing this predicament at a school in Naples, we endeavoured to formulate a pedagogical proposal to address the indiscipline exhibited by some secondary school students. In collaboration with the school's administration and the teachers as our partners, we decided to incorporate an initiative originating from the realm of Physical Education into the proposal. To this end, we tried to develop a pedagogical intervention that would also be based on research. In fact, we chose action research as our research methodology, which according to Thiollent (1998) makes it possible to produce data with a view to developing collective work around the desire to solve a problem shared by the agents involved in the study. In light of this, our research aimed to identify and comprehend potential changes in attitudes among students considered to be unruly. From a pedagogical point of view, the strategy was to experiment with the *Sport Education* teaching model (Siedentop, 1994), with the expectation that its characteristics of enhancing collective student work—when practicing sports at school—could help to give a different sense of permanence at school to students who were assumed to be unruly. The subsequent discourse examines the outcomes of this trial. Primarily, we endeavoured to elucidate the pedagogical and organizational facets of the Sport Education instructional archetype. Subsequently, we accentuate the methodological facets of the investigation, and ultimately we deliberate upon it with an emphasis on the dual aim of this systematization, namely to expound upon the particulars of the encounter. It is also important to discuss the understanding of the “unruly” students.

## 2. Epistemology of the didactic-pedagogical model defined as “Sport Education”

From a general standpoint, it can be comprehended that a critical viewpoint in the realm of Physical Education is the culmination of theoretical and methodological expansions within the domain of formal education. These expansions have been significantly impacted by the rejuvenation movement, consequently exerting a profound influence on the pedagogical perceptions surrounding Physical Education. In short, it is suggested that pedagogical practices move away from their centrality in terms of physical fitness and from a biologicistic conception of the body in order to emphasize an education of the body fostered by sociocultural and pedagogical understandings (Caparoz, 1997). This serves as a guiding principle for the presentation of Sport Education as a pedagogical model within the realm of sports education. Specifically, it offers an alternative to the uncritical methods of promoting sports content, particularly in the context of organizing school sports competitions. In doing so, it can be integrated into the existing pedagogical methodologies of Italian Physical Education.

The *Sport Education* (SE) teaching model was developed by Siedentop (1994), an American teacher

who first introduced it in his doctoral thesis. The latter advocated for the elevation of play education to a privileged position within the curriculum guidelines of Physical Education. The manual entitled *Physical Education: Introductory Analysis*, which was initially published in 1972, served as a vehicle for disseminating his vision of Physical Education (Siedentop, 1972). It was in the year 1982, during a lecture delivered at the Commonwealth Games held in Brisbane, Australia, that Siedentop took the pioneering step of introducing the Sport Education teaching model. This model represented a contextualization of his concept of play education, as it involved the establishment of practice environments that fostered authentic sporting experiences. In doing so, he sought to rectify misconceptions and misunderstandings regarding the relationship between schools and sports.

The curriculum proposal of Sport Education extends beyond the mere instruction of sports games. It offers a viable and coherent plan for reorganizing sports games within educational institutions, with a particular emphasis on their potential for facilitating student learning. This emphasis is particularly pronounced in terms of personal, affective, and social dimensions. According to Graça and Mesquita, this model “focuses on the democratization and humanization of sport, in order to avoid the problems associated with a biased sporting culture, such as elitism, inequity and cheating” (Graça & Mesquita, 2007, p. 410). Thus, in order to guarantee the legitimacy of sporting experiences, Siedentop (1994) integrated six characteristics of institutionalized sport into the sports education model: the sporting season, membership, formal competition, statistical recording, festivities and culminating events. The objective of the sports seasons is to optimize the amount of time students spend engaging with educational material. It is important to acknowledge that present-day programs tend to favour curricula that are highly disjointed. Sport Education advocates for the necessity to increase the amount of time that students spend engaging with the subject matter. This is because the more diverse range of activities that are covered during lessons, the more well-informed the student will become, and the higher the likelihood of meeting their individual preferences. Affiliation aims to cultivate a sense of belonging within the student towards the group.

Regarding traditional teaching methods, an explicit concern is the endeavour to eliminate exclusionary factors. This is achieved by striving to balance participation and providing significant roles to those with less skill, thereby promoting an inclusive and equitable involvement of all individuals. This contributes to enhancing self-esteem and consequently, fostering an appreciation for the undertaken practice. The development of a formal competitive structure is initiated early in the process of team creation, with the aim of ensuring equal opportunities for all individuals to participate. Within this competitive framework, the principle of *fair play* is consistently upheld, which includes assigning distinct scores to the teams involved in the formal competition. At the concurrent time of the competition, self-evaluation tools are formulated, which serve as a significant motivation for the team's

endeavours. As a means of augmenting the competition, documentation of outcomes, conduct, and data are maintained for all the teams, serving to document the chronicles of the competition, with a particular emphasis on climactic occurrences, preferably of a celebratory disposition. In this manner, this particular model is deserving of emphasis, as it offers an alternative perspective to the vast majority of approaches taken towards sports within educational establishments. Specifically, in relation to our educational and intervention project aimed at addressing the conduct of disruptive students, the attributes of Sport Education, with regards to the active involvement of the students, would be our chosen approach in order to provide them with a sense of worthwhile simultaneously instilling in them a responsibility that necessitates adopting an attitude that is completely contrary to that of disengagement from school.

### 3. Methodology

The study was inspired by action research according to Thiollent (1998), which is a type of social, empirical research closely related to an action or the resolution of a problem, in which subjects and researchers are involved in a participatory and cooperative way. In the field of educational research in Physical Education, this methodology has been used in investigations from a critical perspective, as stated by Betti:

“I consider action research to be the best alternative for articulating the School Physical Education project (critical appropriation of the body culture of movement) with the goal of science (producing knowledge in confrontation with the world). Action research also has the advantage of breaking with the traditional researcher-researched power relations, minimizing the ‘technocratic’ risk, the authoritarianism of scientific discourse that claims to be superior to other knowledge. In action research, the permanent dialog with the reality from which the project originated - the pedagogical practice and its actors - reduces this risk of ‘abuse of knowledge’ on the part of the researchers, generally university professors from whom ‘solutions’ are expected” (Betti, 2009).

Drawing on Betti (2009), we added to this the concrete and collective objectives surrounding our organic partnership with a school in Naples. The school had problems with student indiscipline and repeatedly excluded students deemed to be unruly from Physical Education classes, using punitive measures. The extensive discussion with the school's management team revolved around the proposition of employing the Sport Education teaching model in Physical Education, specifically targeting a group of students deemed to be unruly. During this discourse, we emphasized the significance of seeking alternative approaches to address disciplinary issues within the school environment, with due consideration given to the active involvement of Physical Education in this endeavour. The manager employed a criterion which comprised the selection of five students, who, up to



the present date of the ongoing academic year, had exhibited the greatest frequency of instances of indiscipline. The study was executed during the latter half of the year 2023, specifically during the second seme-

ster of the academic calendar. The ensuing table delineates the attributes of these participants as well as the manifestation of their disorderly conduct within the educational institution.

<i>Student ID</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Types of indiscipline</i>	<i>Responsible for recording the occurrence</i>
1	M	2	15	01. Being out of the classroom.	Coordination Pedagogical
2	M	1	13	01. He didn't do his homework.	Art Teacher
				02. Joking and not following the rules.	Professor of Mathematics
				03. Pulled his colleague's shorts down inside the room classroom.	Science teacher
				04. "Cheated" in the multidisciplinary test.	Coordination Pedagogical
				05. It got in the way of the race.	Science teacher
				06. Threw paper.	Science teacher
				07. He was caught out of class.	Science teacher
				08. He tore his n. 1 colleague's backpack.	Coordination Pedagogical
				09. He was caught out of class.	Coordination Pedagogical
3	M	1	14	01. He disrespected his geography teacher.	Teacher of Geography
				02. You were caught out of class.	Science teacher
				03. He was caught out of class.	Coordination Pedagogical
4	M	1	13	01. Others, not detailed by the professor registration applicator.	Art teacher
				02. He was caught playing in class.	Science teacher
				03. He didn't do his homework.	Art teacher
5	M	2	14	01. No classroom activity.	Art teacher
				02. Hasn't done his homework; disrespects his teachers; doesn't carry out classroom activities; doesn't bring the necessary material, such as books, notebooks, pencils, etc.	Pedagogical Coordination

**Table 1. Participating students and their respective incidents of indiscipline**

Once the students had been chosen, it became our responsibility to make them aware of their involvement in this endeavour. This task proved to be effortless due to the enticing possibilities presented by the proposal, which would grant them considerable recognition. Furthermore, we made it clear that their participation in the project was voluntary and that those who opted out of the action research would not face any penalties or repercussions. To our surprise, all the students reacted positively to the proposal. Subsequently, they collaborated with the teacher-researchers in devising and executing the intervention project at the school, focusing on certain aspects encompassed by the Sport Education teaching model. This entire process, spanning from the initial planning stages to the implementation of the project in Physical Education classes, as well as the subsequent maintenance of a dialogue between researchers and occa-

sionally unruly students, represents pivotal elements in the realization of this methodology. It is important to note that it was necessary for the students to agree - through their legal representatives (parents or guardians)—by signing the Informed Consent Form (ICF). The research data was produced using instruments such as a questionnaire (Gatti, 2005) and a focus group (Powell & Single, 1996; Gatti, 2005). With Focus group, we were able to verify everyday practices, actions, attitudes and behaviours that were relevant to a better understanding of what we had experienced during the *Sport Education* pedagogical proposal. The questionnaire was used as a complement to the focus groups, as advocated by Gatti (2005). Through it, it was possible to organize the students' objective responses. All this data was analysed in the light of a qualitative approach (Severino, 2013), which allowed us to select for this product, in terms of results, the aspects

related to the presentation of a concrete pedagogical experience and its impact on the problem of school indiscipline. The aforementioned aspects were previously ascertained and elucidated as the aims of our inquiry. This is precisely what we shall delve into in the subsequent portion of this manuscript.

#### 4. Analysis and description of the Sport Education teaching proposal in a Student Centred perspective

The experience discussed in the following is predominantly grounded in the pedagogical context that gave rise to it. The achievement of this experience is closely tied to the engagement and motivations of the individuals participating in this process. Arguably, this connection is even more significant than the aforementioned theoretical and methodological frameworks we have mentioned earlier. Due to our conviction in this belief, it is worth emphasizing that while Sport Education serves as the primary theoretical and didactic foundation for our proposal, its true worth lies in the commitment of the participants, whether they be the teachers or the students selected for this study, henceforth referred to as the Organizing Team (OT). This implies that Sport Education is a component of pedagogical mediation, meaning that it does not have a purpose in and of itself. The ultimate goal would consistently be student participation—with a focus on disruptive students—and how this active involvement aligns with the educational plan of Physical Education in the execution of the project could potentially serve as a catalyst for a sense of belonging to the school, simultaneously allowing these students, who were previously marginalized, to now feel acknowledged and in the spotlight. In any case, if on the one hand the end is not in the proposal, on the other hand, not having full ownership of it seems to be a mistake, since the educational act must carry with it a pedagogical intention (Pezzano, 2023; Saviani, 2003). Educational work—specifically that which takes place at school—differs from spontaneous forms of education (Brown, 2023; Duarte, 1998).

Therefore, this gives teaching a role that is also one of the most important and the experience illustrated here, as shown, will reveal this level of appropriation. The materialization of the proposal was conditional on the alignment of *Sport Education* with the organization of the project. In this sense, the main characteristics of the *Sport Education* teaching model, namely the sporting season, membership, formal competition, statistical recording, festivities and the culminating event (Siedentop, 1994) deliberately became important references in the OT's actions.

During the sports season, which is commonly referred to as the didactic unit, we organized the material on futsal for the second semester of 2023, as outlined in the Physical Education instructional blueprint with a frequency of two weekly meetings lasting 2 hours each for the entire second semester to which were added the time freely spent by the students for activities on blogs and social networks relating to the experimental teaching activity. The selection of this material stemmed from its prominence in the project.

Furthermore, the preference of the students for futsal played a significant role in justifying its selection. We could rely on the active involvement of over 65% of the students registered at the school. The teacher-researchers taught a variety of futsal-specific topics during the classes, including the fundamental rules and potential adaptations in the school setting, the technical and tactical basics, the historical and societal changes in futsal, and the issues related to doping, corruption, and violence in sports. In the aftermath of this ongoing process, which is presently in the preparatory stage, membership affords students the opportunity to acknowledge their significance in executing the project. The organization of the teams is centred around membership.

In prior instances, the Physical Education teacher held exclusive responsibility for organizing the teams, however, with the introduction of this initiative, the five selected students (OT) assumed the duty of assembling the teams comprising all interested students from the school who wished to participate in the project. Additionally, they undertook the responsibility of selecting the colours and uniforms for each team. The sole pedagogical principle that needed to be adhered to was the preservation of everyone's involvement and the formation of teams that were as equitable as possible. In order to accomplish this objective, the members of the Research Group and Educational Organization visited each classroom within the school and meticulously recorded the names of all the students who expressed interest in participating in the event. They proceeded to segregate the male and female groups since there were going to be tournaments that were specific to each gender. Furthermore, they distinguished between the 1A and 1B classes and the 2A and 2B classes, as there were to be separate tournaments for each academic cycle. During a meeting with the teacher-researchers, the OT made the decision of selecting the students who would assume the role of captains for each team. Subsequently, each captain took on the responsibility of selecting a colleague to join their team, in a sequential manner. In this manner, the teams were not solely composed of students from the same classes, but rather comprised of students from different classes with diverse levels of technical proficiency.

In the context of formal competition, our aim was to offer genuine futsal training, without necessitating extensive modifications or adjustments to the regulations. Nevertheless, the OT endeavoured to underscore situations of fair competition, consistently ensuring the inclusion of all students. OT students, in their turn, participated in the project in distinct groups, which bestowed upon them significant credibility among their peers. It is customary for students to voice grievances during events of this kind, claiming that the organization favoured a specific team. However, in the instance of this initiative, these contentions were eradicated, as multiple teams involved in the games had a member within the organization. The information gathering and distribution of the statistics were carried out by the students in a similar fashion. The team captains were invited by the OT to create the competition tables. The drawing process was conducted in the presence of all individuals involved, following democratic and transparent princi-

ples. The day prior to the occasion, the OT visited all the classrooms to extend a formal invitation to the colleagues from the rest of the school. Afterwards, it was their responsibility to compile and publish the event's results on the school's bulletin boards and blog. The festivity is effectively depicted when one observes that the students have consistently strived for an environment of camaraderie and elation throughout all the preparatory phases. It is imperative to bear in mind that the students participating in the OT are recurrent offenders in instances of misconduct. A substantial portion of their transgressions took place when they were outside the confines of the classroom. Nevertheless, our proposition resulted in these students being absent from class on multiple occasions, and at no point was such negative conduct documented. It is noteworthy to emphasize that their level of engagement in our proposition was always readily apparent. By way of supposition, one can contemplate that during these instances "beyond" the confines of the classroom, there existed a feeling of affiliation towards a distinct endeavour that evoked great affection. An occurrence of great import and significance.

The apex event materialized during the culmination of the project on September 26 and 27, 2023. During this phase, the students not only participated as student athletes, but also undertook the responsibility of organizing the inauguration ceremony and the award ceremony, in addition to assuming other vital roles such as coaches, captains, presenters, scorekeepers, timekeepers, referees, and photographers. The opening ceremony was graced by various members of the school community, including the management team, teachers, civil servants, among others. This momentous occasion showcased an artistic presentation by a student, a word of encouragement from the principal, and an oath administered by a student representing her classmates. An additional highlight of the opening ceremony encompassed a friendly match between the school's educators and the students participating in the OT. The teachers bestowed trophies and medals upon the victorious and runner-up teams, along with exclusive trophies for the highest scorers in the competition. It is imperative to underscore that there were three separate tournaments, namely small boys, large boys, and girls. The students' grasp of our actions appears to be quite clear based on our observation. The proposal, which was initially designed to address a specific issue of indiscipline, but also deviates from the pedagogical focus of Physical Education, surprisingly led to the inclusion of the necessity to reevaluate the structure of the project. This customary occasion has transformed into an exceedingly collective and participatory endeavour undertaken by the students, who were previously passive participants in this process. In this context, it is evident that Sport Education merits recognition as an instructional aid. The paradox lies in the fact that we have distinguished the responsibilities of the students, with the OT assuming a more prominent role than the others. It would be advisable to democratize these assigned roles and their association with the OT, allowing all students to

partake. This dilemma became apparent when a student who was not part of the OT posed a simple question that left the teacher-researchers at a loss: "*Professor, how can I become a member of this organizing team?*".

## 5. Didactic-pedagogical discussion of the main results and feedback of the educational experience

The findings corresponding to the primary objective of the investigation were acquired when a focus group was conducted with the individuals classified as OT participants. These individuals, who were chosen due to their disruptive behaviour in school, had achieved success in the realm of Physical Education. Prior to this moment, we were content with the calibre of their dedicated involvement. Nonetheless, we failed to recognize that these individuals, given their limited level of maturity, would comprehend that their actions entailed socio-educational repercussions. The focus group experience has its challenges (Gatti, 2005). At the outset, our original objective was to convene a gathering comprising the students and select individuals from the administrative team of the educational institution, with the purpose of engaging in a unified dialogue. Regrettably, this approach yielded adverse results, as the students were overwhelmed by the presence of these individuals. In this sense, it became clear that affective relationships between educators and students are fundamental pillars for student development (Germani & Vespasiani, 2023; Mignosi, 2023; Ranghetti, 2002). This is particularly true when this experience takes place in the field of Physical Education, according to various studies (Cruz & Fiamenghi Júnior, 2010; Daolio, 2005; Darido, 2004; Hanauer, 2013; McShan & Moore, 2023; Betti, 1992; Smith et al, 2023). The shyness and excessively concise speeches provided insufficient illustration of the aspects that we wish to compare with the teaching model of Sport Education. Furthermore, the mediations performed by these students, which played a crucial role in the ethical behaviours required for sociability, were not adequately highlighted. Furthermore, the focus group allowed us to take a dialogic pedagogical approach. It wasn't just about the empirical data of the study. It was about a problematizing pedagogical intention on the issue of indiscipline (Freire, 2011). We therefore limited the focus group to the students. This approach was proven to be effective, as the emotional connections that were strengthened during the recent teaching experience contributed to the establishment of trust in the discussions, as evident in certain speeches. However, it is important to mention that this specific group had a pre-existing connection with Physical Education. The data presented in Table 2 showcases the students' level of fondness for this aspect of the curriculum.



Student ID	Do you like PE lessons?		Do you participate in Physical Education classes?		What is your favourite subject at school?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Physical Education	Other disciplines
1	X		X		X	
2	X		X		X	
3	X		X		X	
4	X		X		X	
5	X		X		X	

**Table 2: Relationship with the Physical Education curricular component**

To a significant degree, the active participation of these students in the activities of Sport Education can be attributed to their implicit connection with Physical Education. This also demonstrates that the school's intention to exclude these students from classes was primarily aimed at depriving them of moments of pleasure within the school environment. From our perspective, although the perception of learning and enjoyment may vary among students, we do not see them as mutually exclusive. While we acknowledge that, from a critical educational standpoint, prioritizing learning is always justified, we believe it is reasonable to seek a pedagogical approach that allows enjoyment and learning to coexist within the complex nature of the educational process. The idiosyncrasy that leads Physical Education to a pedagogical approach that allows it to add feelings of greater freedom to its students seems to be true. Proof of this are the statements extrapolated from the experience of the focus group conducted with the OT students:

*"I like practicing physical education, running, exercising, playing ball and everything"* (Student n. 5).

*"Because that's where I have the most fun with my friends"* (Student n. 4).

*"Because it's the only subject where I get to play lots of cool games"* (Student n. 2).

*"Because we have fun, we're happy in class, we don't spend too much time in class"* (Student n. 3).

*"By doing Physical Education I relate better to my classmates"* (Student n. 4).

*"When I take a Physical Education lesson I am able to pay more attention to the teacher's instructions"* (Student n. 1).

*"During Physical Education lessons I have the opportunity to learn while having fun"* (Student n. 5).

The studies conducted by Darido (2004) "show that Physical Education is by far the Students' favorite subject and from this it can play an important role in the necessary identification of a pleasurable and attractive school for Students". The school needs to remain a space for human development, which implies a non-oppressive environment. Indeed, learning to the extent that the expression of playfulness emerges as a condition for this learning seems to us to be an objec-

tive to be pursued. In this sense, "the subject of Physical Education cannot shy away from this objective and must take upon itself the task of transforming the school into an attractive, exciting, thrilling place" (Lovichio, 1998). Therefore, the assumption is made that the presence of enjoyment is a necessary condition for the execution of activities within the school setting. It is posited that a Student who is emotionally engaged in a particular project is less likely to adopt attitudes that may lead them astray from it. Hence, the criterion for exclusion is defined as "efficiency" in order to address issues of indiscipline. Nevertheless, implementing such a measure would deviate from the educational process that is committed to a humanistic approach. Ultimately, it is necessary to question the educational value of a situation where a Student does not actively participate in pedagogical work. During dialogue with the Students, a unanimous consensus was reached in regard to their individual gratification with the Sport Education endeavour. It appears that the rationales behind this phenomenon can be attributed to an interconnectedness between the affective bond with the instructor and the state of contentment and enjoyment experienced during participation:

*"Yes, because I had a lot of fun helping the teacher"* (Student n. 4).

*"Yes, because I felt like an authority"* (Student n. 1).

*"Yes, the experience was good! I really enjoyed it and I didn't miss playing in the school championship"* (Student n. 2).

*"Yes, it's good to be there helping the teacher"* (Student n. 5).

Furthermore, apart from the aspect of enjoyment, another factor that was found to be widely linked to our experience is related to the range of educational methods explored through Sport Education, which relied on the essential and dedicated participation of the Educational Organization (OT) in the project in order to achieve success. The integration of Physical Education as an integral part of the process of planning and implementing pedagogical actions imposes the same level of commitment on students as observed in the teaching practices. To put it differently, we come to the realization that there is a specific task that needs to be carried out, which prohibits any negligent behaviour. The teaching model known as Sport Education introduces a series of functions and roles that are primarily enacted by the students, a fact that they are aware of and that is associated with a dedicated mindset. In this sense, it is worth referring to the following passage, which emphasizes this sense:

*"Advantage that we can consider in using the Sport Education model refers to the collaborative work between the students. During the lessons, we observed that the activities that were provided [...] made them get involved, work together and, thus, each one was able to contribute what they knew how to do best"* (Vargas et al., 2018, p. 744).

Here it is worth highlighting the necessary collective action that permeated our practice. The collaborative dynamic, although positive, is not immune to

contradictions. It is important to note that there was a lack of equalization in the levels of participation and commitment of each of those involved. Homogeneous participation among the students is a difficulty also pointed out by Vargas et al. (2018) in their experiences with Sport Education. However, it is our belief that it is rational to comprehend that life circumstances have an impact on the factors contributing to any decline in terms of involvement. This matter was extensively discussed, particularly in relation to a student who was “charged” with displaying reduced dedication. It was worth the pedagogical mediation of noting that this student had experienced a love conflict in the midst of the experience, which possibly affected his motivations. A conclusive examination emerges when the discussion with the students centres around potential alterations in dispositions towards misbehaviour, hence their role as protagonists in this procedure. Concerning this matter, there was consensus once more. Every individual believed that their active involvement in the Sport Education process had contributed to enhancing their conduct within the educational institution:

*“Yes, because now I think when I do something wrong” (Student n. 1).*

*“After this experience I will not respond rudely if I am scolded by a teacher” (Student n. 3).*

*“Yes, my behavior has improved a lot in class” (Student n. 5).*

*“Yes, this experience served to improve my grades and studies” (Student n. 2).*

We defend the need to delve deeper into what these responses actually represent. After all, mere discourse or even the amount of empirical material recorded here is not the condition for unveiling reality. It is worth appealing to the tradition of historical and dialectical materialism to defend the idea that appearance does not reveal the essence (Marx, 1894). Therefore, it is also within our capacity as researcher-educators to formulate potential conclusions based on our experiences. When comparing the students’ assertions to the educational process encountered during Physical Education and the application of Sport Education, it becomes apparent that their statements are truthful and congruent with reality. However, it is important to acknowledge that their ability to make generalizations is constricted by the specific context of the practice and its participants. While their discourse exhibits a level of awareness, it is crucial to critically examine this data and consider the limitations of this presumed evidence. Freire (2011) taught us the difference and the distance between “awareness” and “conscientization”. What is apparent in this context is the students’ recognition that they have come to understand that school, even if only in the context of Physical Education, serves as a constructive environment where social attitudes rooted in the principle of harmonious coexistence are anticipated. It is further understood that this connection is directly associated with the objective of acquiring knowledge and maturing as a student. Awareness, in turn, will require them to have levels of understanding, as Freire (2011) explains, which will engage them consciously in the fight to unblock everything that harms the processes of

humanization - the ultimate goal of education. One of the students (Student n. 3) shared with us that his participation in the intervention project was solely based on his fear of missing Physical Education classes. This demonstrates that the historical influences of the context are not eradicated by a singular or localized activity, regardless of its success, as was the case with our study. In this regard, addressing indiscipline must never employ the oppressive nature of normative exclusion, which was the guiding principle behind our intervention study. The solution to the root cause of the problem does not lie in removing students from classes; on the contrary, classes themselves serve as the remedy for indiscipline.

## 6. Conclusions

The utilization of the teaching model known as Sport Education presents itself as a possibility for thematizing sport within the educational setting. In addition, it aligns harmoniously with the goals set forth by school Physical Education, a sentiment that we concur with. We perceive within this model the potential to equip students with a critical understanding and appropriation of body culture, particularly due to its emphasis on collaborative work and the imperative for all participants - both students and educators - to actively engage. This particular characteristic has proven to be highly influential in shaping our endeavours to address issues of indiscipline among a specific group of students. After the educational experience, there was an acknowledgment of the individual significance of each student in the progression of the actions. The participants of the project were students who were typically penalized through exclusion from Physical Education classes at school. The intervention had the opposite effect: instead of being excluded, “the unruly” assumed prominent roles. Those who were previously marginalized by normative exclusion - even by their peers who discriminated against them due to their perceived lack of commitment - were now encouraged to participate in a group that had well-defined objectives and goals, necessitating them to adopt a different demeanour. From this particular experience, it becomes apparent that teachers must take into account the element of enjoyment, which is so prominently integrated into Physical Education classes, during the process of pedagogical mediation. The commitment, which is clearly observed in the active participation of these students, who have a history of negligence in their academic endeavours, necessitates this interconnection. From a critical perspective, this interconnection should be a conscious decision on the part of the teachers. It seems contradictory for learning to occur without any emotional engagement within the educational setting. In our specific case, where learning encompassed ethical behaviour and practices of harmonious coexistence, this requirement becomes even more urgent. At the same time, it would be incorrect to make the assumption that our successful experience demonstrates the same level of success in relation to the future good behaviour of the students. In this regard, as a future research perspective it could be very useful both to expand the as-



assessment process of other students involved and to submit to everyone a validated questionnaire on Enjoyment which will allow the results to be appreciated in quantitative as well as qualitative terms.

The intricate nature of human sociability, particularly among developing individuals, does not permit for causal relationships. As we previously mentioned in the introduction of this article, the issue of indiscipline at school encompasses various contributing factors. Nonetheless, it is important to emphasize the students' acknowledgment of the problem, which was uncovered in our study, even with the limitations discussed herein. In conclusion, it is imperative to assert that the incorporation of students in socio-educational interventions within the school setting is paramount, regardless of the difficulties that may arise. Currently, we firmly believe that the issue of indiscipline cannot be resolved by resorting to normative exclusion.

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