

# Changes in the Chilean Physical Education curriculum: voices from the territory

## Cambios en el currículum de la Educación Física chilena: voces desde el territorio

### Mudanças no currículo da Educação Física chilena: vozes do território

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#### ABSTRACT

The objective was to analyze the curriculum development and the didactics used by Physical Education teachers in recent years in a region of south-central Chile. The methodology of the study is qualitative, in which interviews were conducted with teachers with at least 5 years of permanence in the educational system. The results show that teachers approach the teaching-learning process by analyzing the context in which they are immersed. When planning their classes, they rely on the curricular bases established by the Ministry of Education and the characteristics of the students. Regarding current challenges, they seek to implement a constructivist model, making the student part of the educational process, taking into account their integrity and well-being. It is also hoped that the curriculum can incorporate the current problems emerging in society.

**Key words:** Teacher's, Curriculum, Physical Education, Professional experience.

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## RESUMEN

El objetivo de la investigación fue analizar el desarrollo del currículum en los últimos años y la didáctica que utilizan profesores de Educación Física en una región del centro sur de Chile. La metodología del estudio es de tipo cualitativa, a través de entrevistas a docentes con al menos cinco años de permanencia en el sistema educacional. Los resultados dan cuenta de que los profesores abordan el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje analizando el contexto en que están inmersos. Al momento de planificar sus clases se apoyan en las bases curriculares dispuestas por el Ministerio de Educación y las características de los estudiantes. Se concluye que, respecto a los desafíos actuales, buscan llevar a la práctica un modelo constructivista, procurando que el estudiante sea parte del proceso educativo, tomando en cuenta su integridad y bienestar. Asimismo, se espera que el currículum incorpore las problemáticas actuales que emergen en la sociedad.

**Palabras clave:** Docentes, Currículum, Educación Física, Experiencia profesional.

## INTRODUCTION

Education, in all its dimensions, has been considered a process of training and humanization, which implies the constant need to develop as a person and social being (Malagón, 2005). Therefore, the question about what type of subject and society we want to form requires permanent reflection and updating in a social framework of recognition of our differences in a plane of equal rights to a more just education.

Currently, pedagogical training has important challenges, understanding that teaching-learning processes respond to traditional conceptions and a banking pedagogy that creates hierarchies of knowledge, leaving out the importance of the body, emotions, affections and identities. For Toro (2017), these processes have the purpose of organizing

## RESUMO

O objetivo foi analisar o desenvolvimento do currículo nos últimos anos e a didática utilizada pelos professores de Educação Física em uma região do centro-sul do Chile. A metodologia do estudo é qualitativa, em que foram realizadas entrevistas com professores com no mínimo 5 anos de permanência no sistema educacional. Os resultados mostram que os professores abordam o processo de ensino-aprendizagem analisando o contexto em que estão inseridos. Ao planejar suas aulas, eles se baseiam nas bases curriculares estabelecidas pelo Ministério da Educação e nas características dos alunos. Conclui-se que, face aos desafios atuais, procuram implementar um modelo construtivista, tornando o aluno parte do processo educativo, tendo em conta a sua integridade e bem-estar. Da mesma forma, espera-se que o currículo incorpore os problemas atuais que surgem na sociedade.

**Palavras chave:** Professores, Currículo, Educação física, Experiência profissional.

schooling by emphasizing the ordering and selection of what is taught, however, it is not reduced to that alone, but also implies a task and a pedagogical practice.

In this line and specifically in the area of Physical Education (PE), there are different approaches that have transcended over the years through various teaching methods. In the Roman and Renaissance era, the education of the body was centered on a pragmatic model, where the physical performance and health of the individual were the center of education, thus giving rise to gymnastics, based on body exercises that had the purpose of maintaining health and preserving physical condition, while at the same time being exercised as a body practice for the development of discipline (Torrón, 2015). This militarized model

was characterized by the rigidity of teaching work, seeking uniformity in movements through exercises of order and control (Galak, 2014). In the mid-seventeenth century, the educational concept just emerged, with which pedagogical and psychomotor currents began to emerge, emphasizing the motor development of the individual. According to Parlebás (1993), the concept of motor behavior is a motor behavior that puts the fundamental dimensions of the person at the center, the relationship between the cognitive and the expressive, in which it refers to the acting human being in its entirety and unity.

In the last century, regarding PE classes, the idea of training for the physical and educating through the physical is observed, where the attention of the classes is oriented to control practices and rules, ignoring the educational component (Moreno et al., 2016; Castillo-Retamal et al., 2020). According to the above, a direct methodological style is observed where no alternatives are provided for students to access a critical and reflective stance, forgetting their integral well-being. In this sense, management styles reproduce power relations between teachers and students, characterized by instruction and competition, aspects that lead to generating violence and rejection of the model imposed by teachers (Blandón et al., 2005; Moreno et al, 2016).

Nowadays, PE has acquired a new model in schools, with the purpose of overcoming the traditional one, broadening the view to the area of health, healthy habits, motor behavior and inclusion (Ministry of Education [MINEDUC], 2013). However, there are still a series of factors that negatively alter this pedagogical practice. The rate of overweight and childhood obesity in Chile is close to 45%, which is considerably higher than the average of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

[OECD], which is 25% (Ministry of Health [MINSAL], 2019, p.13), this allows us to observe that healthy eating habits and physical activity in childhood are precarious. On the other hand, the elective plans for 3rd and 4th year of high school provide the opportunity for students to choose or not to take the subject (MINEDUC, 2020a), which has become a constant debate, because the organization of curricular time at school is concentrated on subjects aimed at responding to the processes of standardization and university selection, therefore, they will not choose this subject since it does not contribute to their direct training for the Higher Education Access Test.

The role that the teacher plays in the application of this study plan is fundamental, since he or she is the one who has the professional responsibility of giving meaning to the curriculum and attuning it to the needs and experiences of his or her students; Bustamante (2006) states that the teacher must be responsible for the integration with his or her students and with his or her practice, in order to respond to what reality demands of him or her in favor of their training. Based on this, the objective of this work was to analyze the application of the curricula used by PE teachers in a region of south-central Chile, identifying the pedagogical approach, the didactics used and observing whether there are differences in relation to the methods and strategies used by each teacher according to the school environment.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Over time, different paradigms have been recognized that define the conceptions of education. Piaget (1969), Arnold (1990) and Parlebás (1993) are some authors who have contributed currents that have contributed to the formation of PE, which have persisted to the present day.

The traditional model maintains the essence of the authority that exercises power as an instructional pattern, lacking autonomy and motivation. According to Vives (2016), this approach conceives the student as a passive being, that is, a receiver of knowledge and object of the teacher's action, where the teacher assumes the role of transmitter of content. Likewise, it is presented as a project supported by disciplines, based on current problems, tied to institutional regulations, lacking flexibility (García, 2022).

On the other hand, constructivism is understood as a perspective where the individual receives the content and builds his learning

based on his interpretation; In this sense, knowledge is not a copy of pre-existing reality, but rather a dynamic and interactive process (Serrano & Pons, 2011). The pedagogical purpose of this approach is for the student to achieve greater cognitive skills, promoting their level of human development, since it encourages them to reflect and share their learning; according to Levy (2019), the subject's behavior is not oriented towards the discovery of reality considered as absolute, but towards the restitution between the system and the environment through adaptation, without segregating the subject's impulses, interests and vital inclinations (Framework 1).

## Framework 1

### *Differences between Traditional and Constructivist Approaches.*

Differences in approaches	
Traditional: - Moreno et al. (2016)	Constructivist: - (Vázquez, 2001; Moreno, 2012)
PE of order and control.	Comprehensive human development.
Discrimination based on competence.	Pedagogical character.
False inclusion.	Psychomotor and expressive paradigm.
Motor Performance.	Body – mind.
Main objective	
Accumulate and replicate information.	Develop a worldview through meaningful learning.
Basic elements	
It places emphasis on the content, consequently on the person who must transmit it: the teacher.	Equal importance in the interaction: students - teacher - content.
The contents are provided as results, with a static and permanent nature.	Intelligence or thinking processes can be modified through carefully planned pedagogical interventions.

Source: prepared by the authors.

With the arrival of new paradigms, this branch of education begins to see a change towards more integrative approaches, emphasizing pedagogy and reciprocal learning, leaving aside the classic and instructional model. These changes cause the school to be oriented

towards transformation processes based on social justice and the reconstruction of knowledge, reflecting action towards values and attitudes such as respect and equality (Moreno et al., 2014).

Below are the plans and programs contained in the PE curriculum in Chile, specifically from 7th grade to 2nd year of high school (Framework 2).

## Framework 2

*Plans and programs for Physical Education and Health.*

Plans and programs for Physical Education and Health	
<b>Axes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Motor skills.</li> <li>2. Active lifestyle and health.</li> <li>3. Personal and social responsibility in physical activity and sports.</li> </ol>
<b>Skills</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Skills are the students' abilities to perform tasks, solve problems with requirements and adaptation, which can be developed in the intellectual and psychomotor areas.</li> </ol>
<b>Thematic emphasis</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Healthy active lifestyle.</li> <li>2. Physical condition and principles of training.</li> <li>3. Sports.</li> <li>4. Physical motor activities in a natural environment.</li> <li>5. Expressive-motor skills.</li> <li>6. Leadership and promotion of physical activity.</li> </ol>
<b>Attitudes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Assess the positive effects of regular physical activity on health.</li> <li>B. Demonstrate willingness to improve physical condition and interest in practicing physical activity on a regular basis.</li> <li>C. Demonstrate self-confidence when engaging in physical activity.</li> <li>D. Demonstrate willingness to actively participate in class.</li> <li>E. Respect people's physical diversity, without discriminating based on characteristics such as height, weight, skin or hair color, etc.</li> </ol>

Source: prepared by the authors based on MINEDUC (2013).

The main purpose of the Curricular Bases is to provide opportunities for all students to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes that adapt to a healthy active lifestyle, which increases the opportunity for students to know their body, explore the environment and actively and physically relate to others (MINEDUC, 2013).

The curricular proposal establishes three thematic areas and learning objectives associated with this cycle, which are organized around these three axes: "motor skills", "healthy active life" and "personal and social responsibility in physical activity and sport". These allow and promote the development of different learning in an integrated way. In addition, the proposal

contains attitudes aimed at students developing a respectful and autonomous disposition towards life, where it seeks to provide continuity with respect to the Curricular Bases of Basic Education.

According to the thematic emphases, regular exercise is essential to leading a healthy life during this school period. Students are expected to be able to plan and promote physical, recreational or sports activities and also achieve a physical condition appropriate to their level of development. The program also promotes the development of motor skills through the learning of individual, opposition and collaborative sports, in order to encourage the management of individual and group tactics

and strategies. On the other hand, the aim is to carry out physical activities that take place in a natural environment, such as climbing and cycling, with the purpose of providing students with an attractive and flexible alternative. Finally, based on the knowledge and execution of gymnastic movements and body expression, they will be able to develop communicative and expressive skills simultaneously with physical exercise. Currently, the different dimensions that make up the plans and programs of the Ministry of Education reveal a contradiction with respect to what is experienced on a daily basis in the country's schools and high schools, where a tendency towards sports is still observed, which responds to a discourse focused on performance, transmitting the idea that the teaching of PE is based on the development of physical condition (Moreno et al., 2012; Castillo-Retamal et al., 2020).

## METHODS

This research is qualitative, supported by the constructivist paradigm and the interview technique. This methodology was selected to develop an approach to the reality that teachers experience day to day, applying the curriculum based on their school context. The selection criteria were: being PE teachers, working at the basic or secondary education levels, belonging to a municipal and/or subsidized establishment and having at least 5 years of work experience. The selected participants were five PE teachers between the ages of 30 and 45, with educational experience of at least 7 to 15 years. The research was carried out in a city in the south-central area of Chile, between the months of September and November 2022.

In relation to the procedure, it began with the development of a set of questions, which were developed based on the context and problem of study. The set was submitted to the evaluation of judges who ensured the quality and

content of the questions. The interview was conducted in their work context, safeguarding confidentiality criteria, through the signing of informed consent. Prior to the application of the interview, the selected participants were informed about the purposes of the research and were asked for permission to record it in order to safeguard the ethical aspects of the study, considering the guidelines of the Helsinki Treaty.

The interviews lasted approximately one hour and were then transcribed in order to transfer the information, where it was observed that the story of each interviewee was clear and legible (Rodríguez et al., 1999). After that, the results and conclusions were drawn from codes that indicated the categories and subcategories of analysis; based on this, the comparison of both allowed obtaining similarities and differences in order to formulate clear, convincing conclusions that prove the object of study (Rodríguez et al., 1999).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The matrix is presented from which 5 categories and subcategories are derived, which address the concepts of education, curriculum and didactics in PE, where the results and discussions of each of the interviews were analyzed (Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Categories and Subcategories.*

Categories	Subcategories
Curriculum	1. Academic background 2. Teaching method
Didactics	1. Materials 2. Planning
Educational assessment	-
Learning	-
Emerging challenges	1. Teaching challenges

Source: prepared by the authors.

## CURRICULUM

This category allows us to analyze the pedagogical processes and criteria that teachers use when teaching, in which two subcategories are identified: academic training and teaching method. The first refers to the set of knowledge that teachers have to carry out their work as professionals, observing that teachers reproduce what they learned when they were students and when they were trained (Lalangui et al., 2017).

The second addresses the methods used by teachers to achieve the desired learning in students, therefore, a teaching-learning method is the path used to achieve the proposed objective (Hernández & Infante, 2016).

**Table 2**

*Excerpts from Physical Education teachers' responses related to the category: The curriculum.*

Subcategory 1 <i>Academic Background</i>	Subcategory 2 <i>Teaching Method</i>
... "The university did give me the right tools, but I feel that it was just a brushstroke, the rest is learned during practice through experience" ... (E1)	... "The methods are available according to the contexts. At a certain point in the class, more direct control is needed." ... (E1)
... "What the university provides can be very helpful, but unfortunately it is a utopia..." (E2)	... "Different methods are used depending on the context of the class, 30% is direct command and 70% is reciprocal learning" ... (E2)
... "The tools we are given today have changed and there is more support in the area of development of school inclusion..." (E3)	... "In general, I like to assign tasks so that the kids are autonomous in their work" ... (E4)

Source: prepared by the authors.

It is inferred that university teacher training does not provide all the necessary tools to address the educational process in relation to practice, since the context experienced in the establishments is totally different. Practice processes are a necessary period for teachers in training, understanding that the more experience they have, the better prepared they will be to face reality (Souza et al., 2020; Westphal et al., 2020), therefore, it is necessary to generate teaching models appropriate to the educational

context, attending to the social requirements of the time (Delgado, 2019).

According to the teaching methods in PE classes, teachers have evolved regarding the way they approach their classes, today they opt for a methodology where the student is more autonomous and critical. Moreno et al. (2021) affirm that students actively participate in the school process in which they create their own knowledge, giving importance to autonomy. Therefore, the teacher becomes a facilitator of

learning, helping the student to make their own pedagogical decisions (Table 2).

## Didactics

This category refers to the set of resources and procedures for learning. Two subcategories are identified: creative use of materials and planning.

The first refers to the teaching tools that facilitate the teaching-learning processes and that are at the service of the teacher (Imbernón, 2022). The second indicates a work instrument that facilitates the organization, execution and control of the administrative task (Carriazo et al., 2020).

**Table 3**

*Fragments of responses from Physical Education teachers, related to the category: Didactics.*

Subcategory one <i>Materials</i>	Subcategory two <i>Planning</i>
... "Materials are a means to facilitate the idea of the class, so it is important to vary and not always repeat the same ones" ... (E4)	... "I plan based on the context and I make the class based on the environment and development of objectives" ... (E1)
... "If I used resources, I like to work with presentations and Kahoots, new and attractive strategies for the student, one must be creative..." (E4)	... "I review the plans and programs, the suggested activities and through the experience that I have worked in other schools, I adapt them" ... (E4)
	... "Before planning the class, you must know the course..." (E2)

Source: prepared by the authors.

It can be inferred that planning is a resource that must consider the characteristics of the students, the educational context, and the plans and programs (Table 5). This definition is consistent with what is proposed by MINEDUC (2013), in that the Curricular Bases are the reference for establishments that wish to develop their own programs; in this sense, they are flexible to adapt to both educational and social changes. According to the school context, this gives rise to specific aspects such as the characteristics of the students and the availability of resources, therefore, planning should take into account the needs of the students and the teaching units to carry out the subject (Kravchychyn et al., 2017; González-Alfaro, 2022).

The following category identifies the perspective that teachers have regarding the teaching-learning process. The assessment of learning is a process by which students understand their own skills and progress through a grading process (Ryan et al., 2000; Dorrego, 2016).

## EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT



**Table 4**

*Fragments of responses from physical education teachers, related to the educational assessment category.*

**Category**  
*Educational Assessment*

... "I like to use rating scales and rubrics, I think that these instruments give the student the opportunity to have different performances, because they are assigned a score..." (E2)

... "Mainly, the guidelines are sent to the parents here, so that it is more transparent, then in class I call each child, I show them the rubric so that everyone knows what I am evaluating..." (E4)

... "I use rubrics because I feel that it is more complete, it is not a "He does it or he doesn't do it", because the child can do it, but perhaps he is lacking, so the rubric complements that..." (E5)

Source: prepared by the authors.

According to the reports, teachers have evolved with respect to assessment methods, since they use instruments and feedback on learning with the purpose of making the student part of the process and having the opportunity to progress based on their initial performance (Table 4). Alternative assessment is defined as a practical strategy that is based on dialogue and understanding, in which the academic result is not the main thing (Álvarez, 2001; Atienza et al., 2018). In relation to the rubric, Torres & Perera (2010) state that it is a tool that improves the quality of the pedagogical process, helping the student to understand what the teacher's expectations are regarding the training activity, facilitating the achievement of their studies.

## LEARNING

The following category refers to knowledge, skills and attitudes that students are expected to acquire during a training period, considering that learning is a process of permanent change generated by experience (Feldman, 2005; Estrada, 2019).

**Table 5**

*Fragments of responses from physical education teachers, related to the learning category.*

**Category**  
*Learning*

... "The pandemic has played quite a bit against the educational system, as it has become accustomed to working individually and it has become very difficult, because everyone is glued to their phones..." (E1)

... "There are times when I get frustrated, because I ask a student about the content and they forget, then I think they learn it just for the moment, I feel that if the student does not have the desire or motivation to learn, unfortunately there will be no meaningful learning..." (E3)

... "I have mainly considered that the content that one brought has had an impact on the students, because when one gives feedback, the kids answer the questions, since they remember the content..." (E4)

Source: prepared by the authors.

In relation to the above, teachers recognize the pedagogical impact that the pandemic period had on their students' learning (Table 5). Therefore, it was a process that had a negative influence, transforming education into a challenge for teachers (González et al., 2022). According to the OECD (2020), the confinement period caused students to not fully learn the content, a situation that led to the curriculum being made more flexible (MINEDUC, 2020b; Medel-Tapia et al., 2022). Today, there is a lack of motivation and individuality in students regarding the content of PE classes, which has been affecting their behavior and performance, as well as the increase in cell phone use, which, according to Aveiga et al. (2018), decreases the development of social skills and student behavior.

## EMERGING CHALLENGES

This category refers to the need for change in PE, within the framework of complexity present in today's society. The need to think about new challenges for teaching is recognized. For Severin (2017) education is changing, in each cycle there are different purposes and needs, currently educational processes have to be and be carried out in an analytical, critical and reflective way, taking into account that education is a paradigm.

**Table 6**

*Excerpts from responses from physical education teachers, related to the category: Emerging challenges.*

**Subcategory**  
*Teaching challenges*

... "Well, generally one is not prepared because I still feel that there is a lot left to study, for example, how to approach inclusion..." (E1)

... "I need to make a change in what we have been teaching, where the child enjoys the class, enjoys moving and it is not all so sporty..." (E2)

... "The current context is difficult, the kids also arrived very violent and are not empathetic with their peers..." (E3)

... "I think that one is never 100% prepared, but I am willing and always try to keep up to date. You have to keep moving forward with courses and talks, otherwise you get left behind..." (E5)

Source: prepared by the authors.

Regarding the above, the gap between traditional PE teaching and the needs for updating teaching work is recognized (Table 6). Current education is trying to make a paradigm shift, but it is still necessary to move towards a more constructivist perspective, which identifies the differences in social contexts and the socio-emotional needs that students present at the present time. According to Pérez (2022), this new model perceives the learner as an integral person, who has emotions, feelings and expectations that must be addressed by teachers. On the other hand, violence in classes is a problem that worsened after the pandemic, which generated a

difficulty for teachers to teach classes. According to the study by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] (2020), confinement measures had serious implications for the mental health of the population, where exposure to situations of violence in children and adolescents increased. Finally, inclusion in the PE class remains a constant challenge, as teachers consider that there is a lack of further preparation to address this issue, because it involves transforming the learning environment to respond to the needs of all students (Armada et al., 2013; Camacho, 2020). A fact that is complex for the teacher is when the school context does not provide the necessary support and tools. In this sense, Camacho (2020) maintains that the main difficulties encountered are linked to the structure of the educational system, such as the lack of cooperative and interdisciplinary work that allows diversity to be addressed effectively.

## CONCLUSION

According to what has been stated, it is established that the way in which teachers are addressing changes in the curriculum is through teaching methodologies focused on the student having the possibility of solving problems, developing their critical capacity and trying to be autonomous, depending on the educational context they are immersed in. Regarding current challenges, they seek to put into practice a constructivist model, oriented towards relationships of reciprocal recognition in pedagogical work. In this scenario, it is necessary to take into account their integrity and well-being, as well as to eradicate reproductive practices of competition and standardization of sports performance, to give way to a pedagogical perspective of inclusive development of motor learning in PE classes. To do so, it is urgent to enrich the initial and continuing teacher training

of physical education teachers. Furthermore, it is expected that the curriculum will incorporate current problems that emerge in society and, in addition, in relation to teacher training, institutions will be responsible for providing the

necessary tools to teachers so that they can achieve their purpose, while updating them on any shortcomings that professionals who are already in practice may present.

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