

## ‘HOW IS MY TEACHING?’ TEACHING STYLES AMONG MEXICAN PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

“COMO ESTÁ MEU ENSINO?”: ESTILOS DE ENSINO ENTRE  
PROFESSORES DE EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA MEXICANOS 

‘¿COMO ES MI ENSEÑANZA?’: ESTILOS DE ENSEÑANZA ENTRE  
DOCENTES MEXICANOS DE EDUCACIÓN FÍSICA 

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**Abstract:** Purpose: To compare teaching styles (TS) and years of experience among Mexican Physical Education (PE) teachers. Method: 129 PE teachers from the City of Chihuahua completed the Teaching Styles in Physical Education questionnaire; average age: 42.3 ( $\pm 9.6$ ) years; average time teaching PE: 15.7 ( $\pm 7.9$ ) years. Subjects were divided in 6 groups according to years of experience: -6, 6-11, 12-17, 18-23, 24-29 and 30+. Results: no differences were found in traditional TS among groups, but all PE teachers showed high tendency to use that TS. The 30+ group showed values higher than 6-11 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Conclusion: There is a tendency to implement a traditional teaching style, although years of experience allow PE teachers to use teaching styles that fit students' needs and their interest to participate in Physical Education classes.

**Keywords:** Physical Education and Training. Teaching. School Teachers. Professional practice

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Over the years a discourse built in Mexican society within the physical education (PE) context has mainly focused in utilizing a pedagogical approach based in the student-teacher power relationship, this is also known as a top-down approach (LEYVA PIÑA; GÓNGORA SOBERANES; RODRÍGUEZ LAGUNAS, 2004; MÉXICO, 2017). According to Kirk (2010; 2013) a top-down approach, in one hand, is based on what teachers are expected to do, having complete responsibility and control over the creation of the class environment and the different ways to deliver the content planned for the class, on the other hand, students are expected to follow the instructions given by teachers. Though, Castillejo Olán (2017) mentions that a characteristic has been developed as result of the dominant discourse built around the PE curriculum in Mexican society, identifying a deficiency in the planning process performed by teachers, including the use of different teaching styles.

According to Delgado Noguera (2015) mentioning that even though there is a strong connection between the pedagogical approach utilized by teachers in order to help students match their interest, teaching styles implemented within the class are another important aspect to consider. Since, in diverse ways the different teaching styles can be considered as a pedagogical bridge between the approach utilized, teachers and students forming an appropriate method to deliver the content planned for the class. However, is important to say that in many cases teachers can utilize a teaching style that only matches their interest and identity within their teaching personality. This is consistent with Luguetti; Aranda; Nuñez Enriquez and Oliver (2018) describing that beliefs, costumes and values are relevant aspects shaping teachers' pedagogical identities, and these identities can either facilitate or hinder their abilities to implement a variety of pedagogical approaches including teaching styles. Since, an aspect that teachers consider while utilizing a specific teaching style is to feel comfortable and secure enough to deliver the content planned (COTHRAN *et al.*, 2005; KULINNA; COTHRAN, 2003). Although, another aspect that PE teachers consider as tool is supported on their years of experience, because, teachers with extensive experience tend to utilize an approach and teaching style that fits students' interest, motivation and learning (ARMOUR; YELLING, 2004; OLIVER; KIRK, 2015; ZAPATERO; GONZÁLEZ RIVERA; CAMPOS IZQUIERDO, 2018). Therefore, it can be said that teachers seek to implement different ways that facilitate students' engagement, while utilizing a teaching style that also fits their abilities, interest, and cultural background.

Moreover, it seems that the spectrum of teaching styles varies, for instance, Mosston and Ashworth (2002) categorized ten different teaching styles; command, practice, reciprocal, self-check, inclusion, guided discovery, problem solving, individual, learner initiated, and self-teaching, which ultimate goal is to provide a systematic process to deliver the content planned. Similarly, Contreras, De La Torre and Velázquez (2001) categorized seven teaching styles; direct, task development, peer-teaching, small-sided, individual, problem solving, creativity and guided-discovery. Both authors portrayed in opposite ends of their teaching styles spectrums,

in one end, a more 'teacher-centered' style, named command style and direct teaching style respectively. On the other end, a more 'student-centered', named self-teaching style and guided discovery, although, in between these ends, there are other styles offering its own decision-making structure. These spectrums, seek to influence the motivational climate within the PE class, utilizing a way fitting the context, cultural background and years of experience PE teachers hold.

In this regard, this premise has been used to categorize these different teaching styles into six groups; traditional, individualized, participative, socialize, cognitive and creative development (DELGADO NOGUERA, 1991; 2015). For instance, the traditional teaching group holds the direct, command and task development teaching styles, since these are based solely in the teachers' instruction. The individualized group gathers the self-check, self-teaching and individual, promoting a 'self-learning' type of interaction. The participative groups hold the reciprocal, peer-teaching and small-sided, encouraging collaboration among participants. The socialize includes the practice and inclusion being a way to support the social aspects of interaction. The cognitive group gathers problem solving and guided discovery, promoting individual thinking. Lastly, the creative development groups hold the learner initiated and creative style, encouraging an original way to respond to a given situation.

As well, Delgado Noguera (2015) argues that despite the fact that teaching styles are ways of bridging and connecting with students' interest and motivation to engage, in this case in physical activity, sometimes can seem rigid in form. This is not because of the teaching style itself but is related to teachers' pedagogical style (LABILLOIS; LAGACÉ-SÉGUIN, 2009). Although, teaching styles are another way to support teachers' pedagogical styles and abilities to create an appropriate environment that is critical and reflexive. This is consistent with Fernandez-Río; Caladrón; Hortiguera Alcalá; Pérez-Pueyo and Aznar Cebamanos, (2016) arguing that a teaching style is a way to create a learning structure in order to achieve significant learning among students. However, it seems that there is an argument in regards the effectiveness of teaching styles. Several studies consider that the best teaching style is that one that allows teachers to feel comfortable with his/her practice (ZAPATERO AYUSO, 2017; GUEDEA DELGADO, 2010; JAAKKOLA; WATT, 2011; SYRMPAS; DIGELIDIS, 2014). Contrary, other studies suggest that the best teaching style is the one that fits students' interest and generates motivation to engage in the content planned (DELGADO NOGUERA; MEDINA; VICIANA, 1996; GONZÁLEZ-PEITEADO; PINO-JUSTE, 2014; ISAZA VALENCIA; HENAO LÓPEZ, 2012). However, Morgan, Kingston and Sproule (2005) mentions that there isn't a better teaching style going over the others, since it is important to consider several factors that are associated to the context, teachers', and students' as a way to develop a connection between all these elements.

According to Fernandez-Río; Calderón; Hortiguera Alcalá; Pérez-Pueyo and Aznar Cebamanos (2016) when teaching styles are used in a balanced way and none of them are juxtaposed over the others, it favors a positive development among students', facilitating their motivation, interpersonal relationships, learning and autonomy. At the same time, it also encourages teachers to find an optimal way to

create a positive learning environment, despite the discomfort created while utilizing a teaching style that goes against their teaching identity. As such, the purpose of this research was to identify what is the current situation in regards of teaching practice and predominant teaching style among elementary physical education teachers from the City of Chihuahua, Mexico and its relationship with years of experience.

## 2 METHOD

This was a comparative research, utilizing a transversal analysis approach, in order to establish comparison based on PE teachers' years of experience and the use of the different teaching styles in elementary physical education classes in the City of Chihuahua, Mexico.

### 2.1 PARTICIPANTS

Participants of this research project were 129 elementary PE teachers from the City of Chihuahua, Mexico (n=55 females and 74 males). The average age was of 42 years old  $\pm$  9.9, among women was  $42.2 \pm 9.7$  and males  $41.7 \pm 10.3$ . In regards, their teaching years of experience the average was  $15.7 \pm 9.9$  years of experience, women had an average of  $16.3 \pm 7.5$  and males  $15 \pm 8.6$ . Inclusion criteria involved being PE teachers from the City of Chihuahua at elementary level. Permits and authorizations were requested through the Chihuahua Board of Education. Once the procedures required for this study were explained and authorized, the questionnaire was applied and answered.

### 2.2 PROCEDURE

This research project was approved by the Research Committee Board of the Faculty of Physical Culture Sciences at the Autonomous University of Chihuahua. It included presenting the project to the Chihuahua Board of Education, the Physical Education department heads, and the Physical Education curriculum supervisors from the different school districts in the City of Chihuahua, Mexico. It was also presented to all PE teachers (N=182) during a school district scheduled meeting. From the total of PE teachers', the City of Chihuahua holds, only 129 teachers accepted an open invitation to be part of the project. Signing a voluntary consent to be included as participants. Participants were divided according years of experience as PE teachers (<6; 6-11; 12-17; 18-23; 24-29; >30) in accordance with their professional life expectancy (FARIAS, 2018; HUBERMAN, 2000) and in teacher's career phases (GONÇALVES, 2009).

### 2.3 EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH

All participants completed the questionnaire *Estilos de enseñanza en educación física* [Teaching Styles in Physical Education] (MERINO-BARRERO; VALERO-VALENZUELA; MORENO-MURCIA, 2017). The questionnaire has values of internal consistency and homogeneity of 0.82 and Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.79. It

included 20 items divided in 5 categories: traditional, individualized, participative and social, cognitive and creative. The questionnaire was applied during a scheduled meeting that each school district held separately. Although, the data was collected over a period of three months.

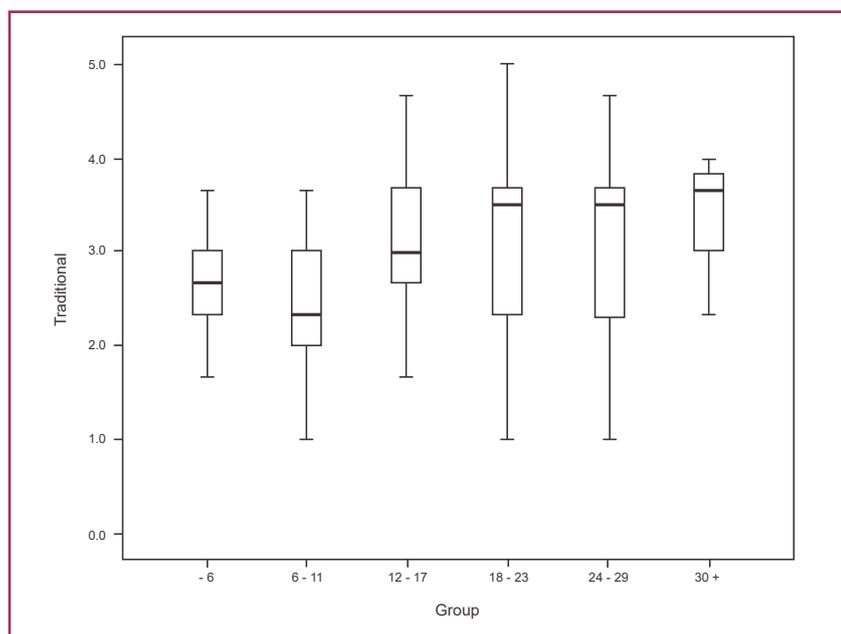
## 2.4 DATA ANALYSIS

The descriptive statistics were expressed as a median for each variable. Analysis of the variance (ANOVA) and the Post Hoc with Bonferroni correction test were carried out to determine the effects for each Teaching Style considering years of experience in PE class. The significance was set at an alpha level of 0.05 in SPSS version 18.

## 3 RESULTS

Median, quartiles, and comparison between groups are reported in Figure 1: Contrast post-hoc analysis suggests no differences between the Traditional teaching style scales. However, there is a growing tendency as years of experience increase. Additionally, all the groups are above the mean, which represents a high tendency to the traditional teaching style within the physical education class.

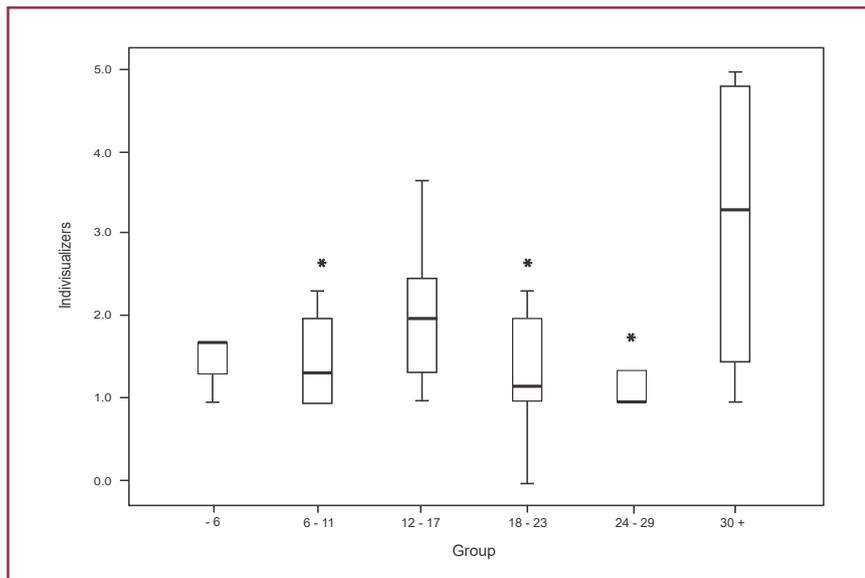
**Figure 1** - Comparison within groups in the Traditional teaching style scale.



Source: prepared by authors

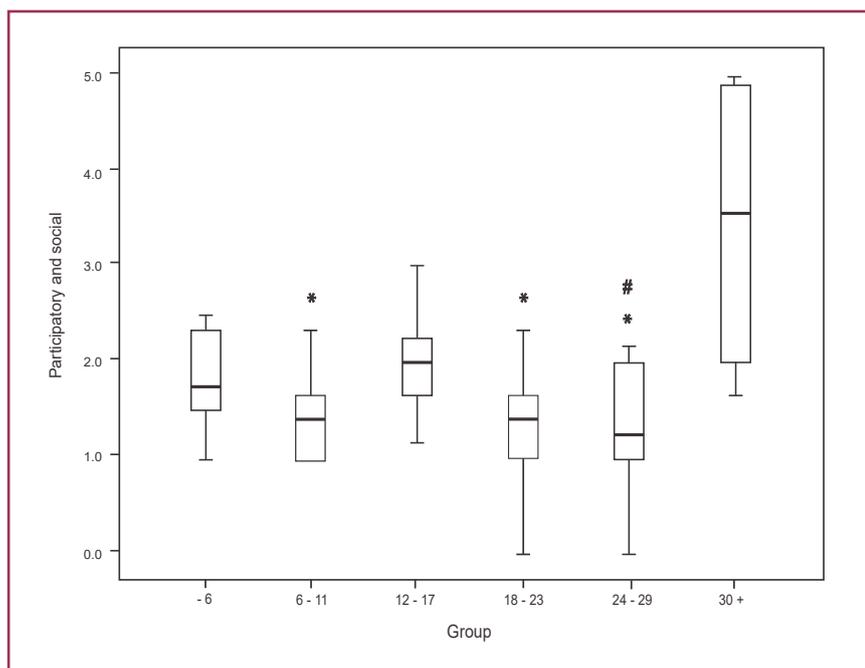
Figure 2 shows higher values within the Individualized teaching style scale in the 30+ group compared to the 6-11, 18-23 and 24-29 years of working experience. Similar performance occurred in the Participatory and Social teaching style scale (Figure 3) and this includes lower values of this scale on group 24-29 compared to the 12-17 group.

**Figure 2** - Comparison within groups in the Individualizer teaching style scale. \*Statistical differences to the 30+ group.



Source: prepared by authors.

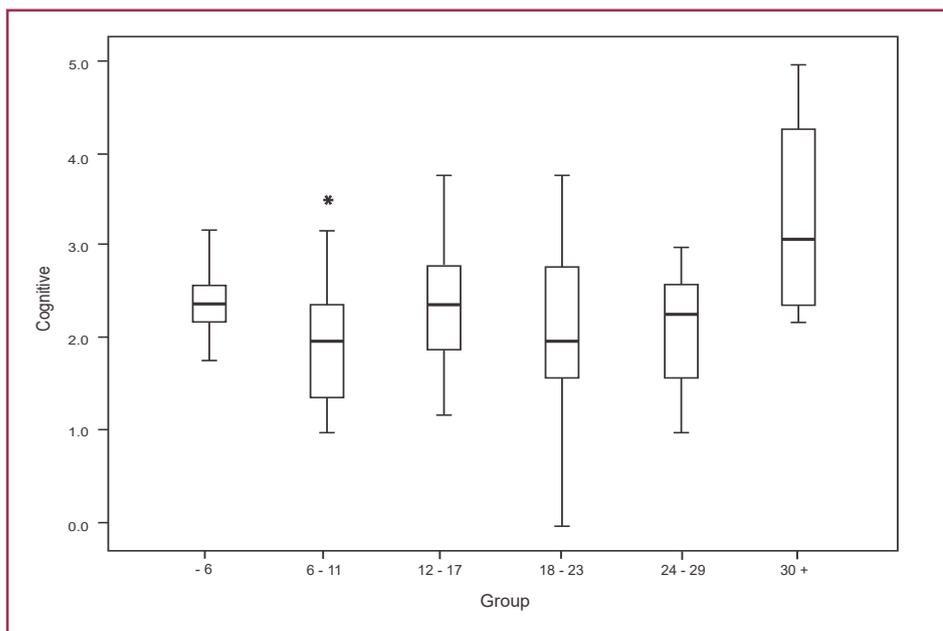
**Figure 3** - Comparison within groups in the Participatory and Social teaching style scale. \*Statistical differences to the 30+ group. # Differences to the 12-17 group.



Source: prepared by authors.

Analysis of the Cognitive teaching style scale data it is presented in Figure 4, all groups are equal with values reported below the mean except the 30+ group, which it is higher than 6-11 group.

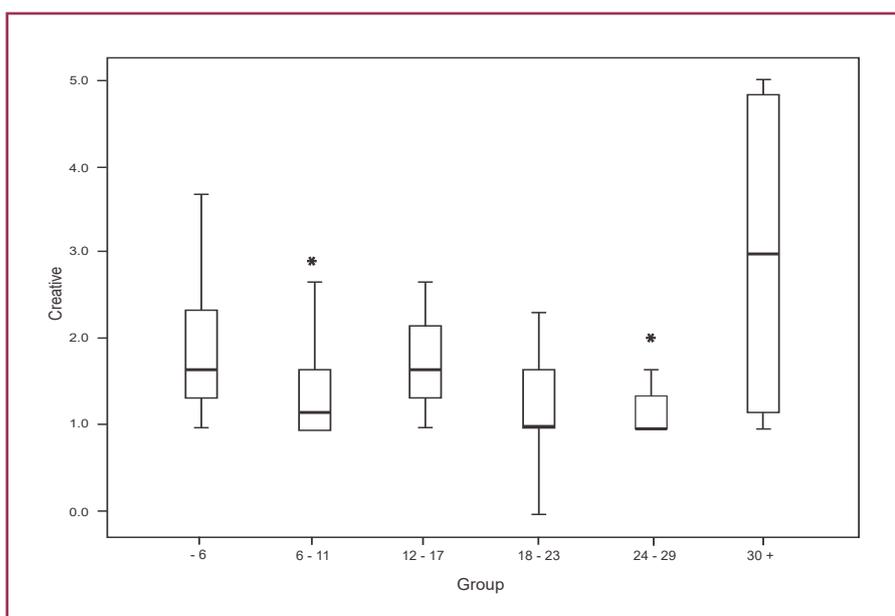
Figure 4 - Comparison within groups in the Cognitive teaching style scale. \*Statistical differences to the 30+ group



Source: prepared by authors.

In relationship to the Creative teaching style scale as the fifth groups of teaching styles it was observed that values are just below the score 2 out of 5 points. This scale measured the creativity teaching style during PE class, similarly, the 30+ group showed higher values than both 6-11 and 24-29 years of experience groups. (Figure 5)

Figure 5 - Comparison within groups in the Creative teaching style scale. \*Statistical differences to the 30+ group



Source: prepared by authors.

## 4 DISCUSSION

The acceptance in utilizing different teaching styles it seems to be global, including physical education teachers in Mexican contexts. It is relevant to say the influence context and cultural background a society has, plays an important aspect to consider while implementing a teaching style, since teachers have a tendency to implement one that makes them feel comfortable (LUGUETTI; ARANDA; NUÑEZ ENRIQUEZ; OLIVER, 2018). This is consistent with Cuellar-Moreno (2016) mentioning that it's important for teachers in dance to feel comfortable utilizing a teaching style that fits their teaching identity in order to portray the specific need in dance (CUELLAR-MORENO, 2016). Similarly, Abad Robles; Gímenez Fuentes-Guerra; Robles Rodríguez and Rodríguez López (2011) mentioned that this also true in a sport-based program, where teachers/coaches have implemented a teaching style that allows them to feel comfortable and most importantly to be in control of the situation. This is because in some cases teachers are expected to have an active participation, thus, having a feeling that everything is under their control is an aspect to consider as part of their teaching strategy (AELTERMAN; VANSTEENKISTE; VAN KEER; DE MEYER; VAN DEN BERGHE; HAERENS, 2013).

Physical Education Teacher Education programs tend to have a similar situation. Where faculty members utilize a teaching style that fit their abilities, context allows them to feel in control of the situation (CARRERAS DUAIGÜES, 2010; GUEDEA DELGADO, 2010). Despite the fact that it's becoming a highly accepted recommendation to implement a non-traditional teaching style, that can facilitate student's interest and allows them to engage, in this case in physical activity. Although, it is important to recognize that the variety of teaching styles present similarities and differences that can either facilitate or hinder teachers' abilities, but teachers tend to utilize a teaching style that allows them to feel comfortable.

Fanarioti (2014), mentions that despite the comfortableness that teachers present while implementing or utilizing a teaching style that fits their teaching identities, that are indirect factors that influence the teaching environment. She mentions that there are indirect teaching ways that affect the utilized teaching style. For instance, utilizing a teaching style such as the individualized, sometimes novice teachers tend to consider implementing a variety of teaching styles within their practice, however, this affects their decision-making. Because sometimes the adequate teaching style and forms to measure the effectiveness of this teaching style becomes a problem that experienced teachers tend to solve more precisely (DUDLEY; OKELY; PEARSON; COTTON, 2011; KULINNA; COTHRAN, 2003).

Physical education can be considered a significant form of human development; thus, it can be pertinent to say that PE teachers can be encouraged to understand the implications of the different teaching style utilized or overused. Because there is little evidence regarding PE teaching styles in Mexico. In this way, Cognitive centered teaching style can be described as a personality dimension which influence attitudes and values, allowing us to demonstrate our results are above the scale median, thus indicating a positive influence of this factor over the participants (RIDING; CHEEMA, 1991).

Cognitive teaching style it's considered as an autonomous/independent way to promote self-learning, thus PE teachers with high development on this structure tend to become more autonomy-supportive and this would boost student's needs and diminish their frustration towards PE class. This overall pattern was found in a recent report by Cheon; Reeve and Song (2019) conducting an intervention program in PE using autonomy-supported structure, showing high levels of motivation, physical self-concept, and health self-care compared with PE teachers in no intervention conditions. This is relevant because it provides an understanding of the influence these provide to a teaching context, and that can either facilitate or hinder students' interest, motivation and learning.

Although there is a little controversy regarding learning teaching techniques, because among teachers' responsibilities are not to take literally what students' want, but to identify what are their pedagogical gaps and create certain ways challenging enough for students to learn significantly (DEMBER, 1965; VAUGHN; BAKER, 2001).

Lastly, creative teaching style encourage students to think independently and offers the possibility to express freely. Although, our results show a lack of this component, what this means is that PE teachers are not allowing students to choose or express their interest in a PE class. However, the group with 30+ years of experience shows a tendency to stimulate creative ways among students. This is contrary with what was reported by Zhang (2007) since she identified than less experienced teachers tend to use more frequently the creative output style than experienced teachers'.

## 5 CONCLUSION

A dominant discourse built within physical activity and physical education contexts is a prevailing top-down approach. What this means is that teachers are expected to take full responsibility and control over the environment and content planned for the class. This tendency is true among Mexican PE teachers utilizing a traditional teaching style that allows them to have the control over the class environment regardless years of experience. However, it is important to say that experience provides a privileged opportunity for them because it brings the chance to diversify and utilize an appropriate teaching style that fits the students' needs and interest. This is consistent with other studies mentioning that teachers should implement an enjoyable, fun and attractive teaching style that fits the students' interest, motivation, and learning in physical education contexts.

The analysis of these aspects is supported by a strong line of research arguing that the benefits provided by years of experience among PE teachers develops an awareness to seek improvement, thus, an interest in creating, providing, and building-in an appropriate class environment. This awareness gathers different aspects such as the quality in students' learning experience, using adequate ways to deliver the content planned for the class. Since experience is a process that can be only built with the willingness of individuals, in this case, among PE teachers. However, 30 or more years of experience are not common to be found in a Mexican context, because,

educational policies allow teachers to retire once they have reached 30 years of tenure or 65 years of age. As such, despite the positive effect years of experience provides to a teaching context, Mexican teachers face a challenge, since there is a lack of professional development to be reached out. Therefore, it can be said that it is important to consider as a viable option way to expand the pedagogy that PE teacher utilize to deliver the content planned, but at the same time to provide ways how they can understand in-depth the similarities differences between teaching styles and the influence a cultural background provides to implement them.

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**Resumo:** Objetivo: comparar estilos de ensino (EE) e anos de experiência entre professores de Educação Física (EF) mexicanos. Método: 129 professores de EF da cidade de Chihuahua, média de idade: 42,3 anos ( $\pm 9,6$ ) anos; experiência como professor de EF: 15,7 ( $\pm 7,9$ ) anos; completaram o Questionário sobre EE em EF. Os sujeitos foram divididos em seis grupos de acordo com os anos de experiência: -6, 6-11, 12-17, 18-23, 24-29 e 30+. Resultados: não foram encontradas diferenças em EE tradicional por grupo, mas todos os professores de EF mostraram tendência elevada a usar esse EE. O grupo 30+ apresentou valores superiores ao grupo 6-11 entre estilo cognitivo e escala criativa ( $p < 0,05$ ). Conclusão: há uma tendência a implementar o EE tradicional, embora os anos de experiência permitam aos professores de EF usar um EE ajustado às necessidades e interesses dos alunos em participar do curso de EF.

**Palavras-chave:** Educação Física e Treinamento. Ensino. Professores escolares. Prática profissional.

**Resumen:** Propósito: comparar estilos de enseñanza (EE) y años de experiencia entre docentes de Educación Física (EF) mexicanos. Método: 129 maestros de EF de la ciudad de Chihuahua, MX, edad: 42,3 ( $\pm 9,6$ ) años, experiencia como maestro de EF: 15,7 ( $\pm 7,9$ ) años, completaron el cuestionario de Estilos de Enseñanza en Educación Física. Los sujetos fueron divididos en seis grupos de acuerdo con los años de experiencia: -6, 6-11, 12-17, 18-23, 24-29 y 30+. Resultados: sin diferencias encontradas en grupo de EE tradicional, sin embargo, todos los docentes de EF mostraron alta tendencia al uso de este EE. El grupo de 30+ mostró valores mayores que el grupo 6-11 entre estilo cognitivo y escala creativa ( $p < 0,05$ ). Conclusión: hay una tendencia en implementar el EE tradicional, aunque los años de experiencia permiten que docentes de EF utilicen un EE ajustándose a las necesidades e intereses de los estudiantes en participar en la clase de EF.

**Palabras Clave:** Educación y entrenamiento físico. Enseñanza. Maestros. Práctica profesional.

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### CONFLITO DE INTERESSES

The authors have declared that this work involves no conflict of interest.

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### COMO REFERENCIAR

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