

The importance of establishing professional objectives and ways of communication during the initial didactic training of the physical education and sports teachers

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Abstract

Background. The professional training of new teachers is a complex process that includes guidance and counseling in the early stages must constantly adapt to professional standards and the trend of modernization of methods in school physical education. Communication is an important component that can be used to form educational processes and human relationships that contribute to the formation of the basis for a successful teaching career.

Aims. The purpose of this preliminary study was to identify the role of mentors and mentees in setting goals and ways of communication in the initial training process.

Methods. The evaluation was performed by applying two subscales: subscale 1 - purpose and subscale 2 - communication of the standardized questionnaire called "Self-assessment questionnaire of the role of the mentoring process". The questionnaires were administered individually and were completed online using the Google form.

Results. The results show that mentors and mentees are focused on the continuous improvement of various aspects of verbal and nonverbal communication specific to professional teaching communication and on establishing and prioritizing career optimization objectives.

Conclusions. Mentors and new teachers are concerned with achieving the most effective forms of communication to optimize the training process. The initial vocational training process must become a major concern of the Romanian education system in order to form an optimal training context for beginner teachers and, implicitly, to lay the foundations for the professionalization of beginners aiming at a teaching career.

Keywords: communication, professional goals, teaching career, mentors, mentees, professional development, physical education and sports.

Introduction

Physical and sports teachers' skills are a set of personal, methodological, educational, sports, assessment, moral skills, etc., which, interrelated, create the unique profile of a mentor (Jones & Brown, 2011; Harris et al., 2009). All these pedagogical, personality and behavioral skills are transformed into professional and adaptive tools in order to optimally fulfill the duties depending on the specifics of the activity, the concrete school conditions, as well as the particularities of physical and sports activities (Mijaica & Balint, 2013; Kemmis et al., 2014; Gidu et al., 2022).

Physical education is a complex process in which the relationship between the mentor teacher and the mentored teacher is recommended to be proactive, so that they know each other's expectations and get involved dynamically

and responsibly in achieving common goals to optimize the mentoring process. Numerous studies have focused on establishing the expectations of the two key actors in the mentoring process, as well as their interrelationship in order to optimize teaching activity (Seery et al., 2021; Nottingham et al., 2017; Asgari & Carter, 2016; Barrett et al., 2017).

The mentoring process requires the establishment of a two-way relationship between the mentor and the mentored person with implications, responsibilities, benefits, etc. on both sides. The relationship between the two key subjects must be based on a mutual appreciation of the involvement, role and responsibilities of the mentor and the mentee (Schatz-Oppenheimer, 2017; Gogolev et al., 2015). The link between mentor and mentored requires a complex approach to both professional and

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personal relationships that are established during the mentoring programs. Communication is the link on which all educational processes, professional interactions and human relations are based. The school society is based on the communication processes through which information is transmitted and received, the exchange of unified and two-way messages between teacher and students, teacher and parent and between teachers (Calapod, 2019; Badau, 2014). The process of improving communication in the teaching activity of the specialist staff requires compliance with and knowledge of the following requirements: encouraging and accepting feedback from students and colleagues; use of correct, open, clear, concise and scientific language and terminology; manifesting an attitude of promoting listening and dialogue with students and colleagues; the diversified use of forms and methods of didactic communication both for the transmission and for the reception of messages (Badau et al., 2021; Gogolev et al., 2015; Bunting et al., 2011). The purpose of this preliminary study was to identify the role of mentors and mentored in setting goals and ways of communication in the initial training process (mentoring process).

Hypothesis

Setting precise goals for professional development, as well as communication methods contribute to optimizing the teaching career in the early stages.

Material and methods

The research was conducted at the Faculty of Physical Education and Mountain Sports, Transylvania University of Braşov, observing the standards of the Ethics Commission of the university, with the consent of the teachers who answered the questionnaire applied in the present research.

Research protocol

a) Period and place of the research

The study was conducted between November 2017 and March 2018 in schools in Braşov County.

b) Subjects and groups

The sample of mentored included 32 beginning and

/ or master's students in the master's degree programs in school physical education and leisure activities at the "Faculty of Physical Education and Mountain Sports of the Transilvania University of Braşov", and the sample of mentors included 22 mentors. / tutors of specialized practice (pedagogical practice), coordinating university teachers for specialized internships and teachers with experience in coordinating students during the internships of specialized practice / pedagogical practice (first grade teachers, collaborators at the profile faculty in Braşov) .

c) Applied tests

In this study we applied a standardized questionnaire called the Self-Assessment Questionnaire of the role of the mentoring process, structured in 6 subscales, each part including a series of specific items to assess its role in the mentoring process and in relation to the mentor, totaling 60 items ("Mentee Role Self-Assessment, pp. 37-39, Building Effective Mentoring Relationships Mentoring Workbook. For this preliminary study we comparatively analyzed the results of the mentoring group and the mentoring group only at subscale 1 (***, 2004). Evaluation of the questionnaire - for the evaluation of each item of the questionnaire the Likert scale was used comprising 4 levels of appreciation, where the scores were: 1 point - total disagreement, 2 points - disagreement, 3 points - agreement, 4 points - total agreement. were individually administered and completed online via Google form

d) Statistical processing

In the preliminary research we calculated the following statistical indicators: X - arithmetic mean of points, SD - standard deviation, Δ - difference in scores; t - Student test; 95% CI - confidence coefficient with the two levels low (lower) and high (upper); α - Cronbach's Alpha (internal consistency); KMO-B - Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test - to measure the adequacy of research samples.

Results

The most relevant results and their statistical processing of the other two subscale analyzed and of the two subject groups, mentored and mentors, will be highlighted in the following tables.

Table I
Descriptive statistics of the Self-Assessment Questionnaire of the role of the mentor - subscale 1- Purpose.

| Sc. | Items | X | SD | t | p | 95% CI | |
|--------------------|---|-------|-------|--------|------|--------|-------|
| | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| The goal | 1. This mentoring relationship is a high priority for me. | 2.750 | .869 | 19.998 | .000 | 2.471 | 3,028 |
| | 2. Finding my mentor was an important step for me | 2.750 | .839 | 20.712 | .000 | 2.481 | 3,018 |
| | 3. Being a responsible mentor is the key to the success of this partnership | 3.250 | .839 | 24.478 | .000 | 2.981 | 3,518 |
| | 4. I was clear with my mentor why I want to meet him / her | 2.925 | .828 | 22.327 | .000 | 2.660 | 3,190 |
| | 5. I have proposed one or more goals to work on with my mentor | 2.700 | .911 | 18.735 | .000 | 2.408 | 2,991 |
| | 6. I will recognize when I have achieved my goals | 2.950 | 1.060 | 17.585 | .000 | 2.610 | 3,289 |
| | 7. I feel good about focusing on this relationship and what I do in it | 3.000 | .784 | 24.187 | .000 | 2.749 | 3,250 |
| | 8. This relationship is a good way to use my time. | 2.825 | .812 | 21.978 | .000 | 2.565 | 3,085 |
| | 9. Periodically, I check to see if we should change our focus in some way. | 3.025 | .800 | 23.908 | .000 | 2.769 | 3,280 |
| | 10. Once I have achieved my goals, I am willing to see that the relationship is reoriented or may end for the time being. | 2.900 | .900 | 20.376 | .000 | 2.612 | 3,187 |
| Total subscale - X | | 2,90 | - | - | - | - | - |

Table II

Descriptive statistics of the Self-Assessment Questionnaire of the role of the mentor-subscale 2-Communication.

| Sc. | Items | X | SD | t | p | 95% CI | |
|--------------------|--|-------|-------|--------|------|--------|-------|
| | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Communication | 1. I communicate the way I agreed | 2.900 | .900 | 15.747 | .000 | 2.483 | 3,216 |
| | 2. I meet with my mentor during the time I have agreed | 2.850 | 1.144 | 20.752 | .000 | 2.527 | 3,072 |
| | 3. Communication between us is limited to at least one or two hours a month | 2.800 | .853 | 20.752 | .000 | 2.527 | 3,072 |
| | 4. I do not communicate more often than I have agreed, unless it is a special circumstance | 2.800 | .853 | 21.781 | .000 | 2.812 | 3,387 |
| | 5. I am an effective listener and I remember what my mentor told me | 3.100 | .900 | 15.815 | .000 | 2.463 | 3,186 |
| | 6. I ask him appropriate questions. | 2.825 | 1.129 | 24.525 | .000 | 2.959 | 3,491 |
| | 7. I share appropriate information about myself | 3.225 | .831 | 19.794 | .000 | 2.536 | 3,113 |
| | 8. I supervise my nonverbal language to make sure it conveys what I want. | 2.825 | .902 | 20.825 | .000 | 2.640 | 3,209 |
| | 9. I invite my mentor to give me suggestions on how to communicate better. | 2.925 | .888 | 24.599 | .000 | 2.936 | 3,463 |
| | 10. I appreciate and try the mentor's suggestions to communicate better. | 3.200 | .822 | 18.092 | .000 | 2.598 | 3,252 |
| Total subscale - X | | 2,94 | - | - | - | - | - |

Table III

Descriptive statistics of the Mentor Self-Assessment Questionnaire - subscale 1- Purpose.

| Sc | Items | X | SD | t | p | 95% CI | |
|--------------------|---|-------|------|--------|------|--------|-------|
| | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| The Goal | 1. This mentoring relationship is a high priority for me | 3.041 | .806 | 18.477 | .000 | 2.701 | 3,382 |
| | 2. Finding my student was an important step for me | 2.958 | .806 | 17.971 | .000 | 2.617 | 3,298 |
| | 3. Being a responsible mentor is the key to the success of this partnership | 3.125 | .899 | 17.013 | .000 | 2.745 | 3,505 |
| | 4. I asked my student to clarify why he wanted to meet me. | 2.958 | .858 | 16.878 | .000 | 2.595 | 3,320 |
| | 5. I asked my student to suggest one or more goals to work on in this relationship | 3.041 | .907 | 16.413 | .000 | 2.658 | 3,425 |
| | 6. My student and I are clear on how we will realize when he has achieved his goals. | 3.208 | .883 | 17.788 | .000 | 2.835 | 3,581 |
| | 7. I feel good about focusing on this relationship and what I do in it. | 2.958 | .907 | 15.963 | .000 | 2.575 | 3,341 |
| | 8. This relationship is a useful passage of my time | 2.833 | .916 | 15.140 | .000 | 2.446 | 3,220 |
| | 9. I check in from time to time to see if we should change our focus in some way. | 3.041 | .750 | 19.852 | .000 | 2.724 | 3,358 |
| | 10. Once my student has achieved his goals, I am willing to see a change in our relationship. | 2.708 | .954 | 13.899 | .000 | 2.305 | 3,111 |
| Total subscale - X | | 2,98 | - | - | - | - | - |

For subscale 1 - The goal, the mentored group gave the highest score on item 3 - Being a responsible disciple is the key to successful partnership 3.250 points and on item 9 - I periodically check to see if we should change our focus in a way 3.025 points, and the lowest scores of 2.7 points were recorded in item 6 - I proposed one or more objectives to work on with the help of the mentor. All subscales 1 - The target, were statistically significant for $p \geq .05$ (Table I), and the confidence factor (95% CI) was within the broad values that reflect the good availability of optimization of the mentoring process. The results of this subscale reflect a good conception of focusing on the professional objectives in the process of initial professional training of the novice teacher.

For subscale 2 - Communication all results on all topics were statistically significant. The highest arithmetic averages were recorded in items: 17 - I share adequate information about myself with 3.225 points and item 20 I appreciate and try the mentor's suggestions to communicate better with 3.2 points. The lowest arithmetic averages were

recorded in the items: 13 - Communication between us is limited to at least one or two hours a month and 14 - I do not communicate more often than I agreed, unless it is a special circumstance with 2.8 points (Table II).

The results obtained reflect the objectivity of the mentors in establishing and discussing the objectives of the mentoring process. All subscale results 1 - The goal, were statistically significant for $p \geq .05$. The highest score was obtained in item 6 - My mentor and I are clear on how we will recognize when he / she has reached the goals with 3.208 points, and the lowest score of 2.08 points in item 10 - Once my mentor has achieved his goals, I am willing to see the relationship change or it may end for the time being (Table III).

Communication is the basis for the implementation of the mentoring process. The most significant results (Table IV) were recorded in items: 18 - I monitor my nonverbal language to make sure it conveys what I want and item 19 - I give suggestions to the mentor for how he can communicate better with 3.125 points. The lowest arithmetic average

Table IV
Descriptive statistics of the Mentor Self-Assessment Questionnaire - subscale 2 - Purpose.

| Sc. | Item | X | SD | t | p | 95% CI | |
|--------------------|--|-------|-------|--------|------|--------|-------|
| | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Communication | 1. I communicate in the way we agreed (personal, telephone, e-mail, e-mail). | 2.875 | 1.034 | 13.612 | .000 | 2.438 | 3,311 |
| | 2. I return to my student in the terms we agreed on together. | 3.041 | .750 | 19.852 | .000 | 2.724 | 3,358 |
| | 3. Communication between us is limited to at least one or two hours a month | 2.708 | .750 | 17.677 | .000 | 2.391 | 3,025 |
| | 4. Occasionally, I contact him spontaneously just to greet him or to pass on some information. | 3.083 | .974 | 15.504 | .000 | 2.671 | 3,494 |
| | 5. I am a good listener and I remember what my student told me. | 2.916 | 1.100 | 12.989 | .000 | 2.452 | 3,381 |
| | 6. He asks me the right questions. | 3.000 | .834 | 17.621 | .000 | 2.647 | 3,352 |
| | 7. I share information from my experience | 2.708 | .954 | 13.899 | .000 | 2.305 | 3,111 |
| | 8. I supervise my nonverbal language to make sure I show what I want. | 3.125 | .612 | 25.000 | .000 | 2.866 | 3,383 |
| | 9. I give the student suggestions on how to communicate better. | 3.125 | .679 | 22.524 | .000 | 2.838 | 3,412 |
| | 10. I'm working to improve my communication skills | 2.958 | .954 | 15.182 | .000 | 2.555 | 3,361 |
| Total subscale - X | | 2,95 | | | | | |

Table V
Comparison of the centralized results to the Questionnaire for evaluating the role of the mentoring process on the 2 subscales.

| Subscale | Groups | X | ΔX | Σ | ΔΣ | α | KMO-B | X ² | p |
|------------------|----------------|------|------|-------|------|------|-------|----------------|------|
| 1. The goal | Group mentored | 2.90 | 0.08 | 29.07 | 0.80 | .798 | .574 | 15.941 | .000 |
| | Group mentors | 2.98 | | 29.87 | | .802 | .387 | 13.621 | .003 |
| 2. Communication | Group mentored | 2.94 | 0.01 | 29.45 | 0.8 | .792 | .649 | 7.994 | .000 |
| | Group mentors | 2.95 | | 29.53 | | .794 | .469 | 82.385 | .001 |

was recorded in item 17 - I share adequate information about myself with 2.708 points. The highest percentage of answers were those of 3 points with 41.75%, followed by those of 4 points with 33.5%, and the lowest was registered with the answers of 1 point in percentage of 8.5%. At subscale 2 - Communication all results on all items were statistically significant. The good results recorded in most items highlight the fact that mentors are aware of the role of communication in optimizing the mentoring process. Mentors are focused on the continuous improvement of verbal and nonverbal communication aspects specific to professional teaching communication.

Comparison of the centralized results to the Questionnaire for evaluating the role of the mentoring process on the 2 subscales.

All subscales had a good and very good internal consistency, Cronbach's Alpha values being between 0.786 and 0.802. For the two subscales, the analyzed results were adequate and useful for research according to the chi2 statistical index, and the significance thresholds had lower reference values of 0.05 (Table V), which reflects the fact that the results are statistically significant.

Discussion

The applied questionnaire was statistically validated by the high values of the Cronbach's Alpha statistical indicator which highlights a good and very good internal consistency of all subscales and the questionnaire in its entirety with the two variants for mentors group and mentoring group.

For the sample of mentors the best results were recorded

in the following items: 3 Being a responsible mentor is the key to the success of this partnership under subscale 1 - The goal; 17 - I share appropriate information about myself in subscale 2- Communication.

Aspects of responsibility for the sample of mentors who need more involvement could be identified by the low results recorded in the following items: 5 I proposed one or more objectives to work on with the help of my mentor from subscale 1 - Purpose; 13 Communication between us is limited to at least one or two hours per month and item 14 I do not communicate more often than we have agreed, unless it is a special circumstance under subscale 2- Communication.

The group of mentors gave a high score to the following items, which they consider important in assuming the specific roles of the mentoring process: 6 - My mentor and I are clear about how we will recognize when he / she has achieved the objectives of the subscale 1 - The goal; 14 - I monitor my nonverbal language to make sure it conveys what I want and item 15 - I give suggestions to the mentor for how he can communicate better from the subscale 2 - Communication. In the mentoring process, the sample of mentors should focus on improving the following items that have been identified with low results, as follows: 10 - Once my mentoring has achieved its goals, I am willing to see the relationship change or may end moment from subscale 1 - Purpose; 13 - Communication between us is limited to at least one or two hours per month under subscale 2 - Communication.

The results of our study are consistent with previous

studies that confirm the role of setting major goals in the process of teacher training for physical education specialists (Kensington-Miller, 2011; Chang, 2020). Also, the results of the two groups included in the study highlight the major impact that communication has on the professional training process and in the teaching activity of physical education. Communication has been analyzed in numerous studies, but each particular aspect identified and analyzed such as communication in physical education and sports contributes to the expansion of knowledge in the field of physical activities in particular and in education in an integrative way (Popa & Bucur, 2017; Iconomescu et al., 2014; Bunting et al., 2012; Badau, 2007). The teaching of physical education at school level requires from the specialists the involvement and pedagogical tact that is based on an efficient and specialized communication.

Conclusions

1. Identifying the role of mentors and mentored in the initial vocational training process (mentoring process) highlighted that the roles assumed are optimal and professional, each of the two categories of mentors and mentored considers that establishing professional goals and developing professional communication skills are very important and with a major impact in the development of the teaching career.

2. Mentors and mentored are focused on the continuous improvement of the verbal and nonverbal communication aspects specific to the didactic professional communication and the establishment and prioritization of the didactic career optimization objectives.

3. The initial vocational training process must become a major concern of the Romanian education system in order to form an optimal training context for beginner teachers and, implicitly, to lay the foundations for the professionalization of beginners aiming at a teaching career.

Conflict of interests

None to declare.

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