


Adapted sports: An experience for initial skills development of sport professionals

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ABSTRACT

The lack of specific training in Adapted Sports in Portugal is an obvious reality and according to this context, the Polytechnic of Castelo Branco, through their School of Education presents in the study plan of the bachelor's degree of Sports and Physical Activity, the specialization of Sport for People with Disabilities. One of the Curricular Units (CU) included in the study plan is Adapted Sports, where several practical and collaborative methodologies are used. A questionnaire was address to 30 students with the purpose of evaluating the teacher's performance and the importance of functional and practical dynamism of this Curricular Unit. The teaching methodologies used are highly appreciated by the students, as confirmed by the results of the curricular unit evaluation (mean 5.62) as well as the teacher's performance (mean 5.66), for a maximal evaluation of 6. This CU also aims to sensitize the entire academic community to Adapted Sports, in order to develop workshops and continuous training in this field. **Keywords:** Adapted sports curricular unit; Evaluation of the study plan; Adapted sport.

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Supplementary Issue: Spring Conferences of Sports Science. International Seminar of Physical Education, Leisure and Health, 17-19 June 2019. Castelo Branco, Portugal.

JOURNAL OF HUMAN SPORT & EXERCISE ISSN 1988-5202

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doi:10.14198/jhse.2019.14.Proc4.82

INTRODUCTION

Given the importance of Adapted Sport for people with disabilities, the professionals' role is to maximize the potential of their athletes, which requires specific training (Cushion et al., 2003). For Moran and Block, (2010) one of the main obstacles to the sport's evolution is the lack of technical training, often acquired only in professional courses, seminars and workshops (Timson-Katschis and North, 2008).

In this context, in order to solve this problem, the Polytechnic of Castelo Branco, through their School of Education decided to include in its sports bachelor's degree the specialty of Sport for People with Disabilities.

In this degree, at the end of the 1st year, students choose to do one out of two specialties (minor): Sports for People with Disabilities or Sports for Children and Elderly. For students who choose the first one, in the 2nd year / 1st semester the CU has a more theoretical component (Adaptive Motor Activity, Special Educational Needs), whereas in the second semester a more practical component (Adapted Sports and Didactics of Adapted Physical Activities) and in the 3rd and last year in the CU of Project and Practical Intervention I and II, an internship is performed that allows the contact with this type of population.

This study aims to demonstrate the importance of the functional and practical dynamism of the Adapted Sports curricular unit.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The teaching methodologies used are structured according to the objectives of this curricular unit, since that due to the methodological diversity, with variability according to the characteristics of the class, the students will be involved in diverse and enriching approaches, which will enable them to acquire planned competences and achieve the proposed objectives.

Participants

This study had 30 students who attended the Adapted Sports curricular unit of this bachelor's degree between 2016 and 2018.

Measures

At the end of this curricular unit, students were invited to fill out a questionnaire, with the goal of evaluating two dimensions: General Evaluation of the Curricular Unit and Evaluation of the Teacher Performance. This questionnaire consisted of 17 items that, throughout a 6-point Likert scale, varying between Totally Disagree (1) and Absolutely Agree (6), allows the student to evaluate these dimensions.

Procedures

To participate in this process, students had to attend between 80% and 100% of the classes taught, whose attendance register was performed by the teacher in the CU computer platform.

Analysis

After the data serialization, they were later analysed for descriptive statistics. According to Hill and Hill (2005): "a descriptive statistic summarizes some of the characteristics of one or more variables provided by a data sample" (p.192).

RESULTS

The questionnaire allows to evaluate the teachers' performance in the curricular unit. Regarding the CU, the items evaluated were: Knowledge Acquisition; Skills development; Improvement of critical sense; Future Skills Development; Adequacy of CU; Sequence of contents; Bibliography; Materials of support. Regarding the performance of the teacher they were evaluated through the items: Preparation; Availability; Relationship; Exhibition; Organization; Exemplification. The final results indicate that the overall satisfaction level regarding the CU had a final mean score of 5.62 and the overall satisfaction level regarding the teacher's performance had a final mean score of 5.66.

DISCUSSION

The results reveal the level of the students' satisfaction about the functional and practical dynamism of the mentioned CU, being highlighted in the evaluation the support material which was the most scored item. In the teacher evaluation the items are: availability, relationship and organization. The aspects above mentioned are essential for the student motivation, which should be stimulated by the teacher, so that the teaching method develops autonomy processes (Biggs and Tang, 2007). According to this, the learning progression must focus on what the student can do, while developing cooperative work with the purpose of acquiring transversal skills, essential for the development of teamwork (Esteves, 2010). It is also worth mentioning that students are asked to present oral presentations in several sports, scientific posters and a practical dynamization of an activity with disabled athletes for the academic community. There were 24 oral presentations and scientific posters, several lectures and 4 practical dynamizations (Table Tennis, Boccia, Goalball and Seated Volleyball).

CONCLUSIONS

At the Adapted Sports CU learning methodologies are essential, both for academic and professional success. We can conclude that students are very satisfied with the functioning and dynamism of the curricular unit and with the performance of the teacher, given that the weighted mean of the two dimensions evaluated are 5.62 and 5.66 respectively for a maximum of 6.

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