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*Translated from the original in spanish*

**Original article**

## **Physical Education, its purpose in Higher Education. Teacher's opinions**

## **La Educación Física, su finalidad en la Educación Superior. Opiniones del profesor**

## **Educação Física, seu alvo no Ensino Superior. Opiniões dos professores**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The third improvement of Higher Education in Cuba, started in the academic year 2016-2017, brought about deep transformations, characterized by uncertainty and the



dynamics of change and such situation demands to propitiate a general knowledge of the educational processes and actions. This work aimed to know the opinions of Physical Education teachers of the University "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca" of Pinar del Río (UPR in Spanish) about the purpose of this discipline and the knowledge they have about its different models. From a qualitative approach, the knowledge of 18 teachers was explored, based on the dialectical-materialistic method. The interview was used as an instrument to collect information. The results allowed to know those variables that determine the purpose of Physical Education, from the model assumed, as well as to glimpse some of the limitations that hinder the integral education of the graduate. It is concluded with some proposals to advance towards a Physical Education that integrates the different models and trends and with future lines of research on the subject.

**Keywords:** Physical education; Purpose; Models; Trends; Opinions; Teachers.

## RESUMEN

El tercer perfeccionamiento de la Educación Superior en Cuba, iniciado en el curso 2016-2017, trajo aparejado profundas transformaciones, caracterizado por la incertidumbre y la dinámica del cambio y tal coyuntura demanda propiciar un saber general de los procesos y acciones educativas. Este trabajo tuvo como objetivo conocer las opiniones de los profesores de Educación Física de la Universidad "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca" de Pinar del Río (UPR) sobre la finalidad de esta disciplina y el conocimiento que poseen sobre sus diferentes modelos. A partir de un enfoque cualitativo, se exploraron los conocimientos de 18 profesores, que se sustentan en el método dialéctico-materialista. Se utilizó como instrumento de recogida de información la entrevista. Los resultados permitieron conocer aquellas variables que determinan la finalidad de la Educación Física, desde el modelo que se asuma, así como vislumbrar algunos de las limitaciones que frenan la educación integral del egresado. Se concluye con algunas propuestas para avanzar hacia una Educación Física que integre los diferentes modelos y tendencias y con líneas de investigación futuras sobre la temática.

**Palabras clave:** Educación física; Finalidad; Modelos; Tendencias; Opiniones; Profesores.

## RESUMO

O terceiro aperfeiçoamento do Ensino Superior em Cuba, iniciado no ano acadêmico 2016-2017, trouxe consigo mudanças profundas, caracterizadas pela insegurança e pela dinâmica das transformações, e tal situação requer a promover um conhecimento geral dos processos e ações educacionais. O objetivo deste estudo foi conhecer as opiniões dos professores de Educação Física da Universidade "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca" de Pinar del Río (UPR) sobre o propósito desta disciplina e o conhecimento que eles têm sobre seus diferentes modelos. Utilizando uma abordagem qualitativa, o conhecimento de 18 professores foi explorado, com base no método dialético-materialista. Uma entrevista foi usada como um instrumento para a coleta de informações. Os resultados possibilitaram identificar as variáveis que determinam a finalidade da Educação Física, de acordo com o modelo assumido, bem como entrever algumas das limitações que dificultam a formação integral do licenciado. Conclui com algumas propostas para avançar em direção a uma Educação Física que integra os diferentes modelos e tendências e com diretrizes futuras de pesquisa sobre o assunto.



**Palavras-chave:** Educação física; Finalidade; Modelos; Tendências; Opiniões; Professores.

## INTRODUCTION

Although it always has been so, the society of the 21st century demands, even more, the presence of Physical Education in Higher Education. The third improvement of Higher Education in Cuba, initiated in the 2016-2017 academic year, brought about deep transformations, characterized by uncertainty and the dynamics of change and such juncture demands to propitiate a general knowledge of educational processes and actions, where Physical Education and Higher Education in general are projected old questions: Education for what person?, for what society?, for what educational level?, and then assume the responsibility to act and face their own pending challenge to the integral formation of the future professional.

As **Afonso García y Paz, (2019)** states,

"The complexity of the elaboration of pedagogical project models for university careers makes to reflect on the projection of Physical Education in the curricular design, given its importance in the integral formation of students". (p.15)

There is, therefore, an era of different positions and points of view on the purpose of Physical Education to achieve the formation of integral and competent professionals, which the University must contribute to integrate, where the process, the effort and the result are evaluated, linked to the model of the professional in Cuban pedagogical training.

Dosing, planning, executing and evaluating an educational process of Physical Education that contributes to the professional's model, require, in the first place, that the teacher knows the contributions that, in general, this document makes to the integral formation of the future professional, as well as the theoretical methodological contributions that integrate conceptions that serve as a basis for his/her performance and construction of knowledge, from his own conception of his/her professional task to transform the pedagogical practice (**Zayas, Vento, and De la Rosa, 2020 p. 670**).

In this sense, the link between study and work, the theory-practice relationship, the relationship between instruction and education, the relationship between cognitive, affective and motor aspects are principles that Physical Education must include both in its theoretical and legislative assumptions, as well as in its practical ones, in order to achieve the comprehensive training of the future professional that is currently a general objective in the professional's model.

It is necessary to think in all areas of Higher Education, from budgets that allow the student to face the social scenario of today. For this, Physical Education cannot be understood without the most essential: to promote the educational fact itself through the practice of human movement through systematic physical exercise, for the benefit of health and quality of life.

Precisely, due to the complexity that underlies the articulation of all the models and trends that determine Physical Education, there are some difficulties linked to them, which are necessary to identify in order to contribute to a quality Physical Education, in accordance with the demands that Higher Education has to meet nowadays.



In this sense, difficulties have been identified related to the initial, permanent and continuous training of teachers who teach this discipline, the inexistence of an explicit consensus on the purpose of Physical Education, the scarce involvement of increasingly interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches, the marked orientation towards physical and sports performance, which evidences inconsistencies between a theoretical model of physical exercises for the benefit of health and quality of life and the implementation of a performance model; This has caused the perceived crisis in the attitude of students towards Physical Education.

Thus, [López \(2006\)](#) has stated that one of the problems that resides in schools in a significant way at a global level is a routine Physical Education, of maintenance, training and sports competitions, which have made it seem more physical than educational; [Zamora \(2009\)](#) has alluded that on the purpose of Physical Education there is still no express approach of wide recognition on the same punctually and deduces regarding the first objective to be achieved by Physical Education that is the basic orientation towards health. For their part, [\(López, Pérez, Manrique, & Monjas, 2016\)](#) have insisted on the scarce training of the teacher who teaches this discipline, definitely the professionalism and the value given to teaching disciplines as opposed to the commitment that teachers must have to educate from Physical Education.

Thus, the pedagogical literature directly linked to Physical Education in Higher Education highlights the importance of integrating the knowledge of this discipline with other sciences, among other disciplines of the curriculum or with curricular strategies, in the different teaching scenarios and with increasingly interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches that enhance the developmental action of the disciplines to organize their knowledge and contribute to prepare man for life, from the academic, work, research and extension components [\(Zayas, Vento, and De La Rosa, 2020 p.666\)](#).

The purpose of this article is to know the opinions of Physical Education teachers of the (UPR) about the purpose of this discipline and to inquire about the knowledge they have about its different models and tendencies.

In order to reconcile and establish necessary comparisons and analysis on the didactics of Physical Education in higher education, the following sources were consulted: [\(Zamora, et al, 2017; García, Fernández, 2017; Muñoz et al., 2017; Serra-Olivares, et al., 2017; Gallego, Rodríguez, 2018; Hamodi, et al., 2018; Castejón, et al., 2018; Chiva-Bartoll, et al., 2018; Fernández-Espinola, 2018; Iván, Argos, 2019; Rigo, Riccetti, 2020, Bernate et al., 2020; Pastor et al., 2020; Oliver, et al., 2021\)](#) Knowing the opinions of teachers on these issues is useful to glimpse how to enhance the training of comprehensive and competent professionals at present in the (UPR). Inquiring about this issue could constitute the starting point for the establishment of pedagogical proposals that will make it possible to advance towards an educational intervention and institutional orientation from Physical Education, which will make it possible to benefit health and quality of life and prepare them for their future performance.



## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This work is carried out at a time when the Covid-19 pandemic is affecting Pinar del Río province. That is why, based on the dialectical-materialistic method, the knowledge of 18 teachers of the Physical Education department of the UPR is explored. The interview is used as an instrument to collect information, since it is appropriate to establish connections between educational practice and the meanings given by the actors who participate in it and, consequently, the most suitable to address the objectives of the work in times of confinement, caused by this evil that plagues everyone.

To begin with, members of the Physical Education Department of the (UPR) were contacted by telephone, indicating the objective of the research and the criteria for selecting the participants. From the aforementioned criteria, the authors of this work contacted the Physical Education teachers, described the objective of the research and made sure that they were willing to conduct the interviews. Subsequently, they were contacted again, via telephone, and a date and time were set for the interviews.

The interviews were conducted at the (UPR), taking advantage of an exchange that took place with the institution's directors. Before conducting the interviews, the participants were informed of the purpose of the study and were guaranteed anonymity, as well as the confidential use of the information obtained. The interviews lasted an average of thirty minutes.

The selection of the sample for the study was guided fundamentally by criteria that ensured that the information collected would be relevant to the research objectives. Thus, the criteria for selecting participants were related to indicators that ensured that the participants had a deep and comprehensive knowledge of the variables assumed.

Specifically, the criteria used for the selection of participants were as follows:

1. To have at least five years of experience as a Physical Education teacher at the (UPR).
2. To have the scientific category of Master and the teaching category of assistant professor and associate professor.

To study the behavior of the object of study, the following dimensions and indicators are determined:

### **Dimensions and indicators evaluated**

Cognitive dimension #1: The aim is to inquire about the knowledge of the discipline of Physical Education and its related sciences, revealing the professionalism of teachers based on their knowledge base and its application.

#### **Indicators:**

- Level of basic knowledge of the purpose of Physical Education in general and of the pedagogical sciences.
- Level of knowledge about the models and tendencies to work Physical Education in Higher Education.



- Degree of knowledge and mastery of guiding documents for work in Higher Education, such as: professional's model, school curriculum and the Physical Education program, according to the objectives of the year.
- Degree of knowledge they manifest about interdisciplinarity in the contents of Physical Education.
- Level of basic knowledge in health education.

Dimension #2 Executive practice: includes the level of development of professionals in the approach to the teaching and learning process in order to achieve the purpose of Physical Education.

#### **Indicators:**

- Level of preparation for the identification of the purpose of Physical Education, according to one or the other model and tendencies and difficulties that exist to achieve the formation of integral professionals.
- Level of preparation for the assessment of the purpose of Physical Education, according to one or another model and tendencies.
- Level of preparation for the determination of the purpose of Physical Education, according to one or another model and tendencies.
- Level of preparation to design educational strategies in correspondence with the purpose of Physical Education, according to one or another model and tendencies.
- Level of preparation for critical appraisal of their professional performance.

Motivational Dimension #3: includes the level of development of the professionals' motivation towards Physical Education, according to one or another model and tendencies and its incidence in the group of students.

#### **Indicators:**

- Level of performance in the development of the teaching and learning process of Physical Education.
- Level of commitment and responsibility shown in their performance with Physical Education.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This research aims to provide a description of the impressions of the teachers who teach Physical Education at the (UPR) on the factors that determine the purpose of Physical Education, according to one or another model or tendencies and on the difficulties that exist to achieve the formation of integral professionals.

The interview applied to the teachers allows to know that in relation to the basic knowledge about the purpose of Physical Education in general and those of the





pedagogical sciences, the interviewees state that one of the priorities of Physical Education in Higher Education is to achieve the formation of integral professionals.

They also allude to the importance of contributing to motor development and the acquisition of habits for the practice of physical activity, for the benefit of health and quality of life; but they put in a privileged place the development with quality of the training process.

Likewise, it is necessary to highlight the current disposition of the teachers in terms of knowledge about pedagogical sciences and sports sciences, expressing that it is vital for integrated work; to create new knowledge from a more interdisciplinary approach, based on the reflection on the educational practice, taking advantage of the student's experiences.

Regarding knowledge about models and tendencies to work Physical Education in Higher Education, the results of the study warn that teachers share the need to conform a more complete integrated, critical-methodological, general model of Physical Education because they do not have a clear and structured approach about the purpose and objectives of this discipline.

It was also found that another group of teachers is more focused on achieving results of a physical and motor type than results more focused on the formation of integral professionals. Their opinions point out that working with models and trends depends more on their preparation. The teachers interviewed highlight deficiencies in their initial, permanent and continuous training in the educational process of Physical Education.

On the other hand, it could be corroborated in 100 % of the interviewees, that the treatment given to the guiding documents of the work in Higher Education, such as: model of the professional, school curriculum and the Physical Education program, according to the objectives of the year, is insufficient.

Regarding the knowledge that teachers express about interdisciplinarity to integrate the contents of Physical Education with other disciplines of the curriculum, the interviewees corroborate that the treatment given to the educational process of Physical Education with an interdisciplinary approach is insufficient, even when the degree of priority and incidence that this has to look for links, essential relationships and critical assessment between facts and concepts in different sources is known.

They also argue that it implies the confrontation of points of view based on a theoretical criterion. The teachers interviewed consider that the experiences and integrating approaches that bring together the contents of the different disciplines are fundamental to achieve the formation of integral and competent professionals.

Regarding the indicator level of basic knowledge in health education, the teachers state that they are prepared to develop strategies to assess health related to physical condition and to offer indicators on the state of health. The teachers interviewed recognize that the programs developed in each of the educational levels and types of educations possess a predominance of disciplinary contents in the curriculum and that the educational process of Physical Education is more focused on achieving results related to physical condition, physical and sports performance and not towards physical components associated with health.





Regarding the preparation for the identification of the purpose of Physical Education, according to one or another model, trends and difficulties that exist to achieve the formation of integral professionals, the teachers interviewed state that they recognize the tribute of the contents of this discipline for the identification of its purpose, they assume that the knowledge and skills for the application in practice of one or another model and trends are insufficient.

Another factor that teachers point out as problematic in their current educational process is that methodologies focused on results rather than on process still prevail, as tendencies of a traditional model that limits the formation of integral professionals.

In relation to the preparation for the assessment of the purpose of Physical Education, according to one or the other model and trends, the opinions of the interviewees point out, for the most part, that Physical Education from its beginnings to the present day has been oriented towards the development of physical capacities and basic motor and sports skills, very focused on technical aspects, based on the use of directive and analytical methodologies, with a predominant approach aimed at enhancing physical condition to raise their physical performance capacity.

In relation to this indicator, the interviewees state that, as a result of the III improvement of general education in Cuba, Physical Education assumes a methodological conception based on an integral physical-educational approach, aimed at modifying the traditional organization of knowledge in this discipline (López, 2006). Likewise, they agree that these contributions on Physical Education constitute the most general theoretical bases for its treatment in the pedagogical field.

Nevertheless, the particularities in Higher Education demand the constant adaptation and updating of its theory; the interviewees assume that the integral approach is not proper of Physical Education, consequently, they affirm as the end of education the development and integral formation of the personality of the students. This affirmation leads them to state that Physical Education is a source of inter-influences of education, aimed at fulfilling its purposes and contributing to the integral development of the personality of students as a whole, through the practice of human movement, by means of physical-systematic exercise. In other words, Physical Education must question the value of education and its possibilities, limits and purposes, depending on the demands and social conditions.

Regarding the preparation for the determination of the purpose of Physical Education, according to one or another model and trends, in relation to this indicator, the interviewees point out that it depends on the pedagogical intentions of the teachers, on their quality, on the way in which the teachers responsible for teaching this discipline understand it; it also depends on the teaching methods and on their ability to discover the educational situations that the programming itself. The interviewees state that, in this case, they would not only have to analyze the content of Physical Education, but also its methodology.

Preparedness to design educational strategies in accordance with the purpose of Physical Education, according to one or another model and tendencies. In this indicator, the teachers interviewed state that they are prepared to design educational strategies and that these, in turn, must be innovative, transforming, active, dynamic, flexible, realistic, linked to the context of action in correspondence with the purpose of Physical Education, according to one or another model and tendencies. Likewise, they agree on the need to



assume the dialectical method as the basis for integrating activities with a reproductive and creative character.

According to the opinion of the interviewees, it is urgent to produce changes to transform not only the way of teaching, but also the way of learning, because both teaching and learning of Physical Education require a different view of the teachers and the students themselves.

Regarding preparation for the critical appraisal of their professional performance, teachers reinforce the need for a systematic self-assessment of their professional performance; their opinions point out that, to the extent that teachers know more about the context, the content and their personal resources, they will know themselves better, which will then allow them to mobilize their potential and overcome their limitations.

However, in relation to their performance in the development of the teaching and learning process of Physical Education, the interviewees argue that they possess a full orientation towards the essential aspects of the content of Physical Education, which they manifest through their liking for their profession, although they maintain that they guide their performance towards a traditional learning, focused more on the result than on the process.

Finally, regarding the commitment and responsibility they show in their performance, in this sense, the interviewees state that they fulfill their duties related to the diagnosis, dosage, planning, execution and evaluation of the activity, use the appropriate means, develop physical capacities, basic motor and sports skills to enhance physical condition and raise the physical performance capacity of the student and prepare systematically to develop the educational process of Physical Education.

Physical Education at the UPR deserves special attention if it is wanted to meet the demands of today's society. Teachers are a key element in advancing towards an integrated, critical-methodological general educational process that arises as a result of the application of the integral approach imposed by education, but we must assume that they do not act only from the framework of their professional performance, but also from their opinions about the teaching of Physical Education (Zayas, Vento, and De la Rosa, 2020 p. 674). Therefore, knowledge of these opinions helps to glimpse those factors on which teachers must have an impact so that the educational practice results in the comprehensive training of the future professional.

The results obtained constitute the basis for carrying out formative actions, as well as for identifying those obstacles that prevent an educational intervention that is attentive to the integral development of the student. Therefore, the contributions of this study are not only of a research nature, but also of a practical nature.

They help to reflect on the issues in which it is necessary to advance in order to integrate the different models and tendencies that currently struggle within Physical Education, since they deny each other and it is indispensable to work in favor of achieving unity between the process, the effort and the results to achieve the purpose, such as the objectives of Physical Education in Cuban pedagogical training, which is expressed in the successive nature of development, in the connections that guide and support its pedagogical practice for the benefit of health and quality of life, depending on the social conditions and demands.



In the contemporary literature consulted, as far as it have been studied in the international sphere, there are several models and trends that have been pretending to assign different purposes to the Physical Education class. Among them are the models of technical rationality and models of practical rationality; the former focuses on performance-oriented Physical Education, proposes the physical sports discourse and the predominance of the curricular conception by objectives.

The second favors the participatory-educational discourse and the development of the curricular conception as a project and process, an issue shared by López 2001, (cited by Zamora, 2009, p. 100), who has stated that in the model of practical rationality an extraordinary importance is given to the role of Physical Education in order to achieve a truly comprehensive education.

In the Cuban context, it is known three models: medical model, psychoeducational model and sociocultural model (López, 2006) and each model proposes a group of tendencies that refer to the way of conceiving the purpose of the Physical Education class.

This leads to two types of models, according to the aforementioned author, to better understand the teaching-learning process of Physical Education: traditional model and integral model; the first one is an extension of the model of technical rationality on which it is incidentally based, as well as the second one, the integral one, on the model of practical rationality, as expressed in the previous paragraph.

Thus, the development of these models to understand the purpose of Physical Education is a complex process that is incessantly renewed with the knowledge of the theory and its application in practice, the characteristics of the student, the educational levels and types of educations that employ them, and even the preparation of teachers. It is something in the process of discussion, precisely because it is a discipline that still does not have an established integrated, critical, methodological, general, particular model that interprets it in its totality, where the process, the effort and the result are evaluated.

Because, in addition, very often, unilateral and eclectic positions appear, which are transferred from certain educational levels to others because there is no clarity and precision in them, attributing to them diverse purposes, properties, characteristics and dissimilar contents that move them away from the general interpretation of their true purpose and how to concretize it in educational practice.

On the other hand, regarding the existence of a consensus on the purpose of Physical Education, very similar findings are found in the international sphere. There are several authors who address the challenges that Physical Education has to face in these first decades of the 21st century (López, Pérez, Manrique, & Monjas, 2016). In this study, it is found that in the second half of the twentieth century Physical Education was oriented to the physical performance of the individual, an issue that is still maintained at some educational levels.

Another of the results of this study points out that Physical Education developed within the educational system cannot have physical performance as its main purpose; the emphasis should be placed on Physical Education contributing to the integral formation of the individual. Therefore, it must have an educational purpose, an issue already pointed out in the specialized literature, in the international context by (Gómez, Jiménez, Ramírez, Roja, 2003 and Zamora, 2009) and in the Cuban context, (López, 2006 and Cornejo, J. A., Manteiga, Pérez, Cornejo, J. J., and Campuzano, 2011).



The interviewees agree with what is expressed by [Arufe \(2018\)](#), they argue that the purpose of Physical Education is not to play sports nor to evaluate the physical performance of an individual. It constitutes a privileged place to improve their state of health, understood as a state of physical, psychic, social, affective and emotional well-being, situations that do not occur in other learning contexts.

The opinion of the teachers regarding these models for understanding the purpose of Physical Education in the (UPR) is that they could be grouped in two directions: those who affirm that Physical Education is based on the development of physical condition and sports skills, in the search for their highest performance, and those who focus their interest on the educational quality of the process, of the effort that takes place, more than on the results in order to achieve an integral education.

Naturally, these criteria should not be considered in isolation or one after the other; the authors believe that in this there are no formulas, no recipes, only a guide for action, but without losing sight of the statement of [Gómez, Jiménez, Ramírez, and Roja, \(2003\)](#). For them, Physical Education is a practice of educational intervention that moves within the sciences of education, it is above all education and must have many common elements with the theories of education in general, in turn it is the only science that is directly interested in the movement of the body, but the theory that serves as a basis is something more than those of the movement of the body, given its educational vocation.

Although there are different assumptions, conceptions and meanings of education, especially in its relation to Physical Education, it already seems indisputable to consider it as a "process of permanent, personal, cultural and social formation that is based on an integral conception of the person" ([Suárez, Valencia and Durán, 2007, cited by Castro, Martínez, and Chaverra, 2012](#)).

Thus, [Cagigal \(1984\)](#) has stated that Physical Education must be understood as a total education based on the body and not as education of the body; it is a circle of special problems of education, it is the set of problems resulting from the problem of the body.

It would not be idle also to emphasize that Physical Education by its nature is one more strategy of education, a means for the education of the whole, it is one of the partial tasks that correspond to education, [Pinillos, \(2006\)](#). That is why from the work done by [Afonso, García, and Paz \(2019\)](#) the importance of the involvement of Physical Education from its content in contributing to the achievement of the aims and objectives of education is made manifest.

Regarding the Physical Education discipline program at the (UPR), teachers agree that it is sufficiently oriented to the development of physical fitness to raise the student's physical performance capacity, an issue that deserves special consideration if we take into account its importance for the student's integral development, as argued in the works of ([Del Canto 2000 and Ruiz 2012](#)).

However, they state that the learning standards are very abstract or ambiguous and difficult to evaluate in order to have an impact on this integral development, since physical activities are oriented more towards physical and sports performance than towards the systematic practice of physical exercise for the benefit of health and quality of life.



Explicitly in the program, it is not declared as a discipline to be articulated with other disciplines and subjects from the curricular point of view around the development of professional skills. On the other hand, in all the content blocks, it is necessary to insist on the need to contribute to the professional model from the academic, labor, research and extensionist components to form integral and competent professionals, committed to their performance and the sustainable development of the country.

This should help to reflect on the current approach of the analytical program, considering that the new Constitution of the Republic of Cuba, in Article 73, clearly establishes the purpose of education as a right of all people and the responsibility of the state, which guarantees quality education services for comprehensive training, from early childhood to university education. The National Education System guarantees the inclusion of the teaching and practice of Physical Education and sports as part of the comprehensive education of children, adolescents and youth (Pérez, 2020).

To achieve these objectives Poblete, Linzmayer, Matus, Garrido, and Flores, (2018) consider that universities should take into account the results that have come from other research on this topic, as this could serve to move teacher training away from that technocratic vision (oriented to sport and fitness development).

Finally, the interviewees identify some issues that hinder the educational event to take place in correspondence with the purpose of Physical Education, according to one or another model and trends for the comprehensive training of the future professional and coincides, in many cases, with what is shown in the specialized literature. Thus, Gracia, (2008), considers that the underlying problem, which affects the very way of understanding this discipline, has to do with the lack of consensus regarding the conceptual and epistemological elements, which should go through the curricular project of this specific knowledge.

The findings of this study coincide with what has been expressed by other authors (Crum, 1985, 1987; Dodds and Locke, 1984), cited by Rodríguez, (2013), have highlighted problems related to the fact that Physical Education classes do not show a teaching-learning character, but point towards the training and maintenance of physical condition and (Locke, 1975, 1984) has alluded to the need for the physical educators community to reach the understanding that the main function of a Physical Education teacher is to help their students to learn.

This last issue is evident in the work of Afonso, García, and Paz, (2019), when they point out the need to deepen the theoretical and methodological preparation of teachers and methodologists of the different institutions, given its importance for the comprehensive training of students.

The hypothesis that serves as the basis of this work sustains that, for the reasons stated above, the creative change that Higher Education and general education demand, with increasing force, a more complete model of Physical Education in its totality, integrating, critical-methodological general, where the process, the effort and the result are evaluated as a consequence of the end that education imposes on it, which is none other than the integral and quality formation of the student, from early childhood to university education. It is made to correspond to the strengths, needs, aspirations of the students, the characteristics of the context, the demands and social conditions at each level of education, without exceeding its educational essence, where theoretical-practical and technological knowledge is articulated, with the elements of physical culture that need





to be studied, where students appropriate a comprehensive general culture and find ways to meet specific needs: intellectual, emotional, physical, social and cultural.

Physical Education in Higher Education should also privilege the formation and reinforcement of motivation towards the profession through the direct and systemic link between physical activities and the reality of work. This allows the development of independence, creativity and reflective and critical thinking that enables the student to master the knowledge and skills for their professional performance, all expressed in the need to develop human potential from the interaction of the student, the teacher and vice versa, with the object of the profession, where the working spirit prevails, as well as the academic, research and extension through a systemic relationship, with a dynamic hierarchy.

Thus, Physical Education classes should have an interdisciplinary approach, not only with curricular strategies, but also with the other disciplines that make up the curriculum to raise its scientific level. This motivates both students and teachers, where they demonstrate their research skills and apply the acquired knowledge, theoretical and practical, in the development of research to solve with a transformative, critical and independent perspective, the fundamental professional problems that arise in educational practice.

Therefore, Physical Education at the University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca" must deal with the educational task of these students, but not in an abstract way, but from the educational practice itself to express integrally and concretely the development of the subject, basic capital of each country.

This approach to Physical Education is not a panacea that alone assures the integral development of students in universities and other educational centers; it is a point of view that allows a deep, critical and healthy reflection on the current functioning of this discipline in order to favor new learning for the preparation for life and the permanent education of the whole society.

This study, after reviewing the literature, constitutes a first approach to know the opinions of Physical Education teachers in the (UPR) on the factors that make possible the determination of the purpose of Physical Education, according to one or another model and tendencies to achieve the integral formation of the future professional.

The main limitations of the study are the following: the research developed on the subject, as far as it has have been studied, is practically non-existent and the studies are more focused on establishing the theoretical bases for determining the purpose of Physical Education, according to one or another model and tendencies to achieve integral formation, than in gathering empirical evidence about the object of study, the scarce availability of the participants, since most of them spend most of their working hours in distance education or else they perform other types of tasks from their homes due to the COVID-19 pandemic affecting the province of Pinar del Río.

Therefore, it would be convenient to carry out new research with Physical Education teachers in each of the educational levels and types of education to know if the opinions of these teachers differ according to the educational level. Likewise, it would be ideal to carry out studies in this line to analyze the existing differences between practicing teachers and the future professional in training who will teach Physical Education in the different educational levels and types of education.



The results obtained could constitute the starting point to establish measures that make it possible to advance towards a more complete, integrated, critical methodological, general approach to Physical Education for a total education of the student's personality. Knowing the teachers' opinions makes it possible to diagnose a reality and to make some concrete proposals around the dimensions and indicators studied.

The review and specification of the models and trends of Physical Education in the curricular design of Higher Education, the training of teachers in methodologies that promote the experience and experiences for the practice of physical activity, for the benefit of health and quality of life by the student, the establishment of measures in the management of the centers to enable a coherent Physical Education project shared by all teachers and the implementation of measures to ensure the collaboration of the department with the year groups, with the university, the community and the family, are some of these proposals. Another long-awaited proposal by teachers working at the UPR has to do with the need to set lines in the Physical Education program for the attention to the professional approach of its contents for the treatment of professional problems and the education of the personality towards the profession, from the academic, research, work and extension components, the role played by curricular strategies, as well as the links with other subjects of the discipline itself and with others related to the career to be achieved in order to prepare students in the solution of professional problems with an integral approach, which will last over time in the educational legislation of our context.

## CONCLUSIONS

In correspondence with these purposes, the opinions of Physical Education teachers at the UPR on the purpose of this discipline and its different models and tendencies have been explained in this work. These opinions, sometimes problematic and even contradictory about the purpose of Physical Education, place us before an immediate task, to transform our way of doing and seeing things, a transformation that involves preparing the faculty conceptually and procedurally towards a more complete, integrated, critical-methodological and general approach to Physical Education. It has also been an objective to evaluate the process, the effort and the result; this has been the purpose of so many hours of dedication. This article is the summary of this intention, knowing that many pitfalls and barriers remain to be overcome. If this work contributes to the integral formation of the future professional and, in fact, to society, the intentions of the collective of authors will be considered achieved.

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The authors declare not to have any interest conflicts.

**Authors' contribution:**

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