

Teaching Strategies in Italian Primary School Physical Education during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Abstract

During the COVID-19 pandemic, primary school teachers tackled many challenges when providing online, in- person, and hybrid teaching. In Italian schools, the first lockdown (March-May 2020) led to a quick transition from face-to-face to online teaching. In the following two school years, the return to face-to-face classes has often brought about hybrid teaching.

The study aimed to explore teaching strategies in primary school Physical Education (PE), in online and in traditional teaching.

104 teachers (F= 97; M=7; M_{age}=53.24; SD=7.34) were involved from 4 primary schools in Sicily (Italy). Teaching practices and teaching strategies in distance education instructional delivery and in face-to-face classroom were assessed with the Motivation, Emotions, and Teaching Strategies Questionnaire (Moe, Pazzaglia, & Friso, 2010).

Positive significant correlations were found between teachers' perception of the usefulness of the teaching strategies in distance learning and diversified teaching strategies ($p < .001$).

In virtual teaching, 21% of the teachers used collaborative strategies and 35.5% used alternative teaching approaches. In online teaching, 13 teachers performed motor activities with adaptations and only 3 used cooperative teaching strategies during motor activities.

In Italian primary schools PE is taught by teachers who do not have a degree in motor and sport science. From the 2022-23 school year, the Recovery Plan (NNRP) envisages PE teachers in school staff, but only in the final year. Inclusion of a PE staff teacher partially answers the need to improve PE classes. Furthermore, efforts on pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes should focus on strengthening teaching methods in disciplinary and interdisciplinary teaching.

Keywords: Motor Education, Online, Effective practices, Instructional Delivery, Recovery Plan.