

The Effect of Greek and Hungarian National Curricula in the Elementary Schools Teachers and Learners' Interactions

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Introduction

The introduction of both National Curricula in 1995 (IPEPTH, 1995; NCC, 1995) was undoubtedly the innovative attempt needed by Greece and Hungary. One of the present study objectives was to investigate how these contextual curricular changes have influenced teachers' instructional practices. Due to the pervasiveness of teacher efficacy, it seems appropriate to begin viewing a little more critically at teachers' and learners' interactions in order to understand the consequences for PE pedagogy.

Predictions about the kind of results this research would yield were difficult to make. It was expected that the PE teachers and learners in both countries would reveal differences in the verbal and non-verbal teaching-learning interactions attributed to the PE teachers characteristics concerning the independent factors of ethnicity, gender, years of teaching experience and postgraduate studies.

Methods

Eighty-four PE teachers randomly selected, employed in the cities of Athens (19 females and 23 males) and Budapest (20 females and 22 males) consented to participate. They all taught mixed gender elementary school classes. Teachers' experience ranged from 3 to 35 years and they taught at 4th, 5th and 6th grades of elementary schools. Twelve of the teachers in Athens and 13 in Budapest have done postgraduate studies. One lesson of each teacher choice in which they taught any activity to pupils was videotaped and coded during a half-year period in both cities with the Cheffer's Adaptation of Flanders's Interaction Analysis System (CAFIAS). A total of 67.200 tri-seconds were observed in Athens and Budapest. The mean IOA agreement measure was 91.6% throughout data collection. MANOVA, by means of a GLM, was conducted to examine whether any differences in the CAFIAS interactions (dependent variables) by the teachers in two countries could be attributed to the characteristics of teachers described *vide supra* (independent variables). All significant MANOVAs were followed by ANOVAs and subsequent exploratory data analysis with Games-Howell procedure for pairwise comparisons.

Results

MANOVA resulted in significant multivariate effects for the factors of PE teachers' gender and post-studies. Follow-up ANOVAs indicated that teachers with post-studies presented significant univariate effects on Inter2 (accepting ideas and feelings of learners), $F(1, 76)=19.15, p=.000, \eta^2=.20$, for which teachers in Budapest showed an increased preference. Additionally, teachers with post-studies were significantly different for Inter9, that is, Hungarian pupils developed initiatives, $F(1, 76)=9.23, p=.003, \eta^2=.11$, compared to Greek pupils. Conversely, teachers in Budapest, either with and without postgraduate studies, spent more time evaluating (Inter10), $F(1, 76)=5.68, p=.02, \eta^2=.07$, compared to their Greek colleagues. In contrast teachers without post-studies were found significantly different for Inter4 (informing, recommending and describing), $F(1, 76)=20.6, p=.000, \eta^2=.21$, on which teachers in Athens spent more time than the teachers in Budapest, and pupils' in Athens responded mechanically (Inter7), $F(1, 76)=5.70, p=.019, \eta^2=.07$, compared to the pupils in Budapest. Males in Athens and in a bit less extent in Budapest, spent more of their time in Inter5 (teacher guides learners), $F(1, 53)=4.13, p=.047, \eta^2=.07$, compared to their female colleagues.

Discussion

Postgraduate studies seemed to be one of the main factors influencing teachers-learners interactions of this study's samples. It appears that, well-educated teachers applied more pupil-centered approaches. They also included greater high order questioning and critical thinking on pupils. From the analyses of the data, the differences revealed between Greek and Hungarian teachers-learners interactions reflect the differences in the National Curricula. Despite the 'openness' of Hungarian Core Curriculum, placing PE within the 10th cultural domain, Olympic Education was not an issue of reference within it. The Greek curriculum contextual 'closeness,' characteristic of a subject matter centred curriculum, presents a great quantity of activities without this to guarantee quality in instruction. It is our hope that both local and government-appointed curricular developers would promote indirect instruction to their future works.

References

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