

Physical Education Faculty student's transit: a career, two stages degree.

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Abstract: This paper studies the academic transit of the students of the Physical Education Faculty at the National University of La Plata, centering the scope in the results obtained by the analysis of the institutional regulation, the curriculum and questionnaires made to students of the different years in the career. The existence of a division in the formation of the students in two periods is proposed: one in that they attend to classes and another one related to running of their final exams. The aim of this work is to show the students transit in the Universidad Nacional de La Plata Physical Education Faculty. Inquiries to different students from different stages of the degree were taken in order to establish relationships between year of admission, current coursed and approved subjects.

Keywords: Programs of study. Physical Education: curriculum. Higher education.

1 INTRODUCTION

This work has the purpose of observing the transit of Physical Education students from Universidad Nacional de La Plata (UNLP) who are enrolled in the 2000 Plan.

Based on this concern, there was first of all a tracking of investigation on the theme, finding only two articles that discuss it tangentially, since they focus on one hand on the desertion of students and on the other hand on the admission course. The first that was found is a study conducted by Chistian Brini y Pablo Zuazo (1996) called "*La desertión en el Profesorado Universitario en Educación Física* [The desertion of the University Lecturer in Physical Education], whose central theme is the desertion of the Physical Education lecturer from UNLP, taking as point of analysis the number of years received of lecturer enrolled in the 1984 plan. The second investigation found was conducted by Jorge Fridman, Lilia Rossi Casse & Susana Sautel (2001), called "*El Ingreso a Educación Física: De la Especulación al dato investigado* [Admission in Physical Education: From Speculation to the investigated act]", the same consisting of a descriptive study on the students of the admission course in PUEF, analyzing the performances and evaluations of that instance, considering origin, age, gender, among other variables.

Considering the foregoing, the question is asked of does the transit of students from year to year in the career occur?

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2 METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive work conducted by survey. For this purpose, surveys were conducted with 163 Physical Education students from Universidad Nacional de La Plata, with 5 years in the career, in different subjects allowing the grouping of students according to the year corresponding to the course being attended and year of admission. Will be considered first year students those who were surveyed in the subject Physical Education 1 and Formative Gymnastics 1, second year Human Physiology, third year Theory of Education 3, fourth year Methodology of Investigation in Physical Education, and fifth year Observation and Educational Practices in Physical Education 2.

The sample can be considered, according to Germani (1970), as in random accident.

Survey was chosen as method of collecting data because it allowed access o a greater number of students, in a relatively short time for its administration, since it was carried out during course periods.

These were conducted with students who were attending the Physical Education course in Curriculum (2000), structured in 5 years with a total of 28 signatures, under various schemes within these correlations.

The surveys asked about the age, year of admission, number of courses enrolled in, number of courses approved in, number of promotional subjects, job status, marital status, if any corporal practice is performed systematically and if studying for another career, which?, among other questions.

The same considered the first week of October 2006.

3 REGARDING THE SYSTEM OF PROMOTION AND CORRELATIONS

Considering the problem under study, first a brief contextualization of the regulatory rule in UNLP and in particular in the Faculty of Humanities & Educational Sciences (FaHCE) will be conducted on the promotion of the subjects, different modalities for it, and the system of correlation, which is a central point to be considered when studying this theme. With this purpose, we resorted to the “University Statute”, which states that educational institutions, in 1996, currently in effect and under the

“Education & Promotion System” of 1985 of the Humanities & Educational Sciences Faculty, where the career study unit operates. (UNLP, 1996; UNLP, 1985).

In the first of the documents, in its tenth article, we find what becomes the regulatory rule of general nature, indicating that:

Student attendance at theoretical classes is not mandatory, except in systems of promotion duly regulated by the Academic Boards or Managements; attendance in classes or practical works will be mandatory, in the conditions regulated by each Faculty, Department, Institute or Higher Education School” (UNLP, 1996, Art. 10).

This will serve as framework for what will be of what will be one of the central characters of the system of “promotion with partial evaluation and final examination”, described in the Education and Promotion System.

In this last document, three modalities of promotion of subjects are described; In first place the one called “Promotion with Partial evaluation and final examination”, (UNLP, 1996, art. 13) which consists of general lines and non-mandatoriness of students to attend theoretical classes from those departments that have assistant personnel, and mandatory attendance in practical theoretical classes given by the lecturer, in those cases in which there is no assistance from lecturers and mandatory attendance of 85% of the practical class works from the assistant lecturer. For the promotion in this system, one must comply with the rules of attendance, conduction of works, and approval of partial exams. With these three items, the department conducts a concept for the student, credits him in the student’s book, for approval in the subject the student must pass in a final exam. Which is determined by the department.

The second modality of promotion of the subjects was found in article 17, called “Promotion with final exam” (open system), which establishes:

The system will encompass all subjects taught in the Faculty, except those that require fulfillment of lab practices, and/or physical aptitude tests and/or professional practices (UNLP, 1996, art. 17).

The exam consists of a written and eliminatory test and an oral test. Promotion being subject to the approval of both bodies.

The third modality is the “Promotion without final exam” (article 20), which requires attendance in theoretical and practical classes given by the lecturer or associate of the department and those given by assistant lecturers. This in turn requires conduction and approval of certain tasks for the department, partial exams and a final work.

Another point to be considered is the regulation regarding the correlations of the subjects, for which we resorted to article 46 of the “Education and Promotion System”, which states:

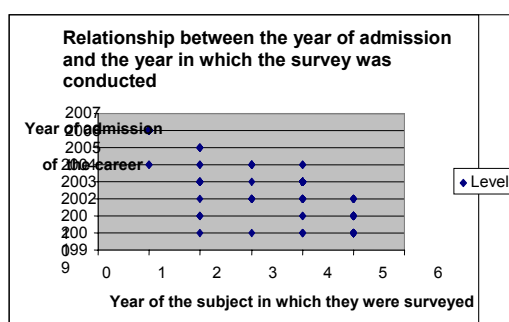
The student who wishes to attend a course as a regular must be approved, on enrolling, the course of the previous corresponding course, if any. In a sequence of three subjects, of which the first corresponds to the second and this to the third, to attend the third, the student must be approved in the first and approved in the second courses. (UNLP, 1996, art. 46)

With this general rule, we proceed to present the data revealed by the surveys.

4 DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CURRENT YEAR AND YEAR OF ADMISSION

On beginning to analyze the data from the surveys, we analyze the relation existing between the year of admission and the year corresponding to the subject the student is attending at the time of the survey. (Graph 1)

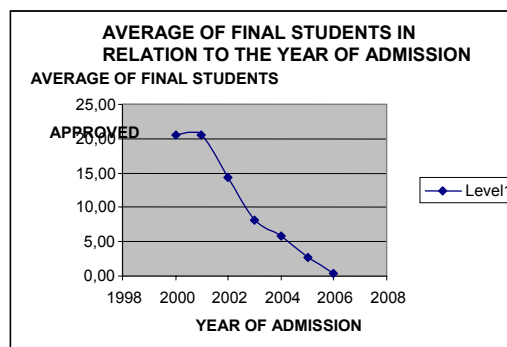


Graph 1: Relations between year of admission and year of the subject in which they were surveyed

In this relationship, we could establish a coefficient of correlation of -0.86. Going further in the analysis, we saw that the years of the study plan in which majority of the students from different years of admission were the years intermediate to the formation, the second and fourth. A data to be highlighted is that only 7 of the students in the fifth year correspond to the curriculum, the remaining 26 are in arrears with regard to their careers.

4.2 YEAR OF ADMISSION AND FINAL YEARS

Graph 2 shows the relation existing between the year of admission in the career and the number approved at the end.



Graph 2: Average of final students in relation to the year of admission in the career

Table 1: Mean, standard deviation and coefficient of variation of final exams approved of the students according by the year of admission.

YEAR OF ADMISSION	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	COEFFICIENT OF VARIATION
2000	20.47	7.98	38.99
2001	20.53	7.18	34.97
2002	14.26	6.84	47.99
2003	8.23	4.09	49.67
2004	5.91	3.81	64.42
2005	2.80	2.68	95.83
2006	0.44	0.65	148.40

We note in graph 2 and table 1 that the students admitted in 2000 and 2001 are those where there is the highest homogeneity, due to the coefficient of variation of 38.99 and 34.97 respectively. We must explain that the students were supposed to conclude their courses in 2004 and 2005 respectively.

On observing those students who due to their year of admission are should be in the career at present, we established that the fifth year is the year in which one observes the highest homogeneity in relation to the number of final students, considering that to study the course used as sample, a minimum of 16 finals is required, something detailed regularly, as well as a series of courses.

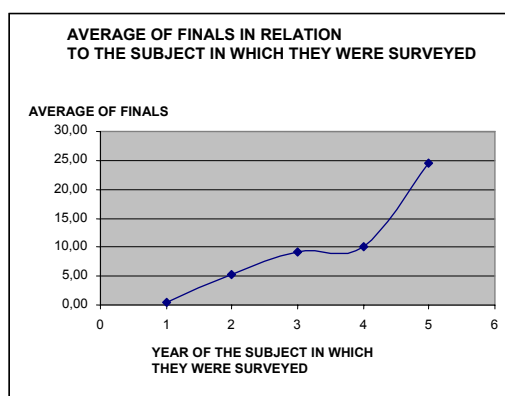
In the students who had to be in the first and second year of the career, depending on their year of admission, one notices the highest heterogeneity in the promotions.

Conducting a transversal analysis of the number of finals in relation to the year of admission, we could see an increase in the finals per year in those students who are coursing the fifth year, remaining proportionally the same in the students who were a

year late in the career. Until these years, the number of finals per year remained stable, however, at a number lower than the increase mentioned.

4.3 CURRENT AND FINAL YEAR

In graph 3, we could see that the relation existing between the current year, if we consider the subject in which they were surveyed, and the final years.



Graph 3: Average of finals in relation to the year of the subject in which they were surveyed

Table 2: Average, standard deviation and coefficient of variation of final exams approved per students according to the year of the subject in which they were surveyed

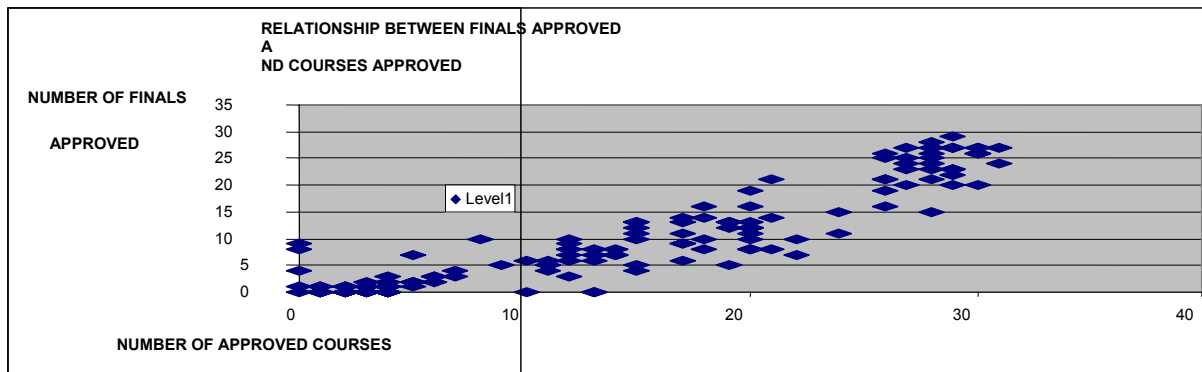
YEAR OF THE SUBJECT	AVERAGE	STANDARD DEVIATION	COEFFICIENT OF VARIATION
1	0.44	0.64	146.36
2	5.27	4.10	77.69
3	9.07	3.83	42.25
4	10.16	3.98	39.14
5	24.42	2.73	11.17

What we see from graph 3 and table 2 is that the students in the four first ears of the career had a low average of approved finals, being in turn the grouping of data in which there is the highest heterogeneity. The students from the fifth year of the career had an average of finals higher than double that of the previous year, being in relation to this group more homogeneous.

With regard to the number of finals approved, when these are grouped per year in which the subject is being attended, than in the group according to the year of admission.

4.4 THE FINALS AND CRUSADES

After observing the transit through the career of the students, considering the number of finals approved, we could establish the relationship between the number of promotional subjects and number of attended subjects approved. This point serves to support the previous statement that the students have a high number of finals in their last year of formation. In graph 4, we can see the correlation between these variables.



Graph 4: Relationship between finals approved and approved courses.

The coefficient of correlation between the number of finals approved and approved courses is 0.92. On considering only this data, we can state that the existing correlation is very high, however, establishing the coefficient of correlation between these two variables, considering the different years of admission as shown in table 3:

Table 3: Relationship between averages of approved courses and approved finals, according to the year of admission of the students.

YEAR OF ADMISSION	AVERAGE OF APPROVED COURSES	AVERAGE OF APPROVED FINALS	COEFFICIENT OF CORRELATION
2000	24.68	21.74	0.92
2001	25.76	20.53	0.86
2002	21.22	14.26	0.76
2003	14.33	8.23	0.71
2004	8.73	5.82	0.51
2005	6.60	2.80	-0.5
2006	2.67	0.44	0.42

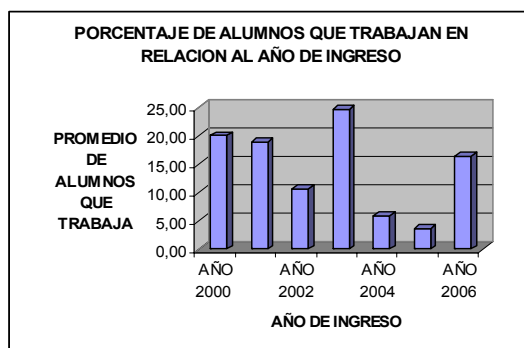
One can see that the coefficients of correlation between the finals and current is very low in the first, second, third and fourth year of formation. Considering the fact that the students attend more subjects, passed their courses, but were not promoted until

a later time. This being probably one of the causes of delay in concluding their graduation.

Linking this with the averages of the finals per years, which we have expressed previously, we reached similar conclusions, the students in the first four years of formation attend the courses corresponding to the level, yielding as of the fifth year of formation the finals due and those corresponding to the ongoing year, this is because as a result of the finals due, they cannot continue with all the subjects corresponding to said year. This lower time load and requirement by the system of correlations of a greater number of finals, requires that students promote the subjects they would have attended in the fifth year to be able to continue their studies.

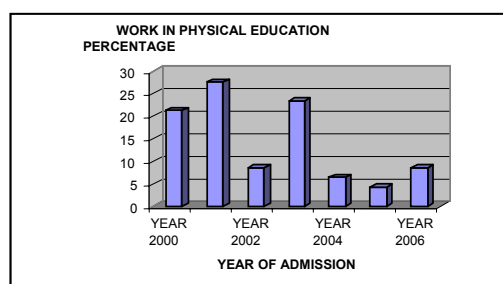
4.5 RELATION BETWEEN STUDY AND WORK

We will now see the employment situation of the students, out of the 163 surveyed, 85 work and the remaining 78 do not. Graph 5 shows the percentage of students who work according to the year of admission. The highest number of students who work were found in the senior years of the career.



Graph 5: Percentage of students who work in relation to the year of admission

Out of the total students who work, 55% are in jobs related to Physical Education, this percentage increasing as of the 4th year of admission. Graph 6 shows the relation between the year of admission and the conduction of works related to Physical Education



Graph 6: Work in Physical Education

The highest number of students who work in Physical Education are those found in the more advanced years of the career, coursing the 4th and 5th year.

Table 4: Average of the finals approved by those students who work according to the year of admission in the career.

YEAR OF ADMISSION	AVERAGE	STANDARD DEVIATION	COEFFICIENT OF VARIATION
2000	22.59	5.66	25.05
2001	20.79	6.82	32.80
2002	11.33	6.76	59.68
2003	8.90	4.05	45.46
2004	4.80	4.66	97.05
2005	3.67	3.06	83.32
2006	0.50	0.53	106.90

Table 4 gives the average, standard deviation and coefficient of correlation of the finals yielded, in those students who work. Comparing this data with that of table 1, which shows the same data of the total students, we found significant differences among those who work and those who do not.

This point is a limiting factor of the transversal sample used for this investigation, since we could not know if a student who was admitted in 2001 for example worked throughout his education or was recently employed. To be able to establish a better analysis, we recommend future investigations on the theme in a longitudinal study.

4.6 CURRICULUM: CORRELATION SYSTEM

Having raised the low coefficient of correlation between the number of finals and coursed, and the year of admission and finals in the first years of formation, we proceed to study the system of correlations, corresponding to the 2000 plan.

For this end, a study was conducted that consisted of establishing how many courses can be done with the least number of possible finals. The data is determinant, showing that a student can attend up to 11 subjects without an final, for 2 finals, he can attend 17 subjects and with 5 finals he can attend 24 subjects, almost the total of the curriculum, which includes 28 subjects and two in language skills and one in computer skills¹.

5 CONCLUSION

To conclude this work, we were able to establish that the transit through the graduation course of students can be divided into two periods. The first is extended from admission up to the fourth year, characterized by students attending the majority of subjects, but not yielding the finals corresponding to such courses, rather a much lower number. The second period of formation, which is established between the fourth year of formation up to the course conclusion, is characterized by a high percentage of finals.

This division established in the curriculum may be due to a certain amount of laxity of the system of correlations of the curriculum, expressed by the low number of finals required to advance in the course as occurs in the first stage studied. Also being influenced by the “Educational and promotion system”, which requires approval of the subject in a sequence of three subjects, thus reducing the requirements for promotion of subjects.

Another factor that influenced is the manner of promotion of the subjects, in which majority of the cases is in the modality of “promotion with partial evaluation and final exam”, due to the fact that the students had a greater number of courses approved and low number of promotional subjects. Limited to the requirements that the students, once approved in the courses, had three years and three months to pass the corresponding final.

To round up, I consider that the delay of students in the promotion of subjects is not only due to regulatory issues and correlations, but collaborate so that students in the first years dedicate themselves almost exclusively to attending subjects, without promotion in all of them. For this reason, we propose reanalyzing the system of

¹ For greater details on the subjects that can be attended due to the finals, refer to the 2000 Curriculum for Physical Education at UNLP

correlations and promotion of subjects, as well as the conditions in which the students attend the various courses.

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