



## First day of class activities to promote interaction and engage students in a management subject of a university Physical Education program: a case study

*Actividades de primer día de clase para promover la interacción y generar engagement del alumnado en una asignatura de gestión de un programa universitario de Educación Física: un estudio del caso*

### Authors

Josep Petchamé <sup>1</sup>  
 Joshua Muñoz <sup>2</sup>  
 Francesc Genovard <sup>2</sup>  
 Odalys Torné <sup>3</sup>  
 Francesc Solanellas <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitat Ramon Llull (Spain)

<sup>2</sup> Universitat de Barcelona (Spain)

<sup>3</sup> University of Wisconsin-Madison (United States of America)

Corresponding author:

Joshua Muñoz

[joshuamunozv@gmail.com](mailto:joshuamunozv@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** This study analyzes the perceptions of students in a university physical education program after participating in a first-day activity designed to introduce a management course and encourage their engagement. Additionally, students were asked about their preferences and dislikes regarding first-session activities to enhance engagement from the beginning of the course.

**Methodology:** The research was conducted over two academic years and included two strategies: the reciprocal interview activity and a survey on activity preferences for the first session. The session design was based on previous experiences and studies highlighting the importance of early classroom interaction. After the session, students responded to open-ended questions about their experience, particularly regarding the reciprocal interview activity.

**Results:** The analysis of student responses led to the creation of a list of activity preferences and an evaluation of their perceptions of the reciprocal interview activity. The results showed a positive assessment of the activity, emphasizing its role in fostering interaction and active participation in the course.

**Conclusions:** The designed session helped identify key elements valued by students and proved effective in promoting engagement. These findings can contribute to the redesign of the course program, optimizing teaching strategies for future editions.

### Keywords

First day of class, engagement, interaction, management subject, physical education students, reciprocal interview activity.

### Resumen

**Introducción:** Este estudio analiza las percepciones del alumnado de un programa universitario de educación física tras participar en una actividad de primer día de clase diseñada para presentar una asignatura de gestión y fomentar su participación. Además, se indagó sobre sus preferencias y rechazos respecto a las actividades de la primera sesión con el objetivo de mejorar el engagement desde el inicio del curso.

**Metodología:** La investigación se desarrolló durante dos cursos académicos y consistió en dos estrategias: la reciprocal interview activity y una encuesta sobre preferencias de actividades en la primera sesión. La planificación de la sesión inicial se basó en experiencias previas y estudios que destacaban la importancia de la interacción temprana en el aula. Tras la sesión, el alumnado respondió a preguntas abiertas sobre su experiencia y la reciprocal interview activity en particular.

**Resultados:** El análisis de las respuestas permitió generar un listado de preferencias y evaluar la percepción del alumnado sobre la reciprocal interview activity. Los resultados indicaron una valoración positiva de la actividad, destacando su papel en la promoción de la interacción y la participación activa en la asignatura.

**Conclusiones:** La sesión diseñada facilitó la identificación de elementos clave valorados por el alumnado y demostró ser efectiva para fomentar el engagement. Estos hallazgos pueden contribuir al rediseño del programa de la asignatura, optimizando las estrategias de enseñanza en futuras ediciones.

### Palabras clave

Primer día de clase, engagement, interacción, asignatura de gestión, alumnado de educación física, actividad de entrevista recíproca.

## Introduction

Undergraduate programs of physical education include diverse subjects that are focused on different topics and academic disciplines with the aim of enhancing student employability (Vidal-Vilaplana et al., 2023). These programs are oriented to prepare the undergraduates in physical education topics, in addition to include topics of other fields which are required in the labour market, such as Information and Communication Technologies—usually acronymized as ICT—(Batez, 2021; Göktaş, 2012), or management subjects (DeLuca & Braunstein-Minkove, 2016; Vidal-Vilaplana et al., 2023). In fact, the degree in Physical Activity and Sport Sciences taught at the National Institute of Physical Education of Catalonia (Spanish: Instituto Nacional de Educación Física de Cataluña, INEFEC)-Barcelona exemplifies this logic. The inclusion of topics not apparently related with the core of a degree pursuing the employability of the students—e.g., as is the case of management subjects incorporated in engineering programs (ABET, 2020)—, are widely extended. In doing this, it seems relevant to design the first session of class of management subjects taught in programs which its core focus is not management carefully, as is the case of Physical Education programs, since this session may have a positive effect pursuing different objectives, as shown in diverse academic works (Deluse, 2018; Jafar, 2021; Kreizinger, 2006; Lane et al., 2021; Petchamé, Iriondo, Canaleta, et al., 2021; Robinson, 2019). By encouraging interaction between the participants from the very first session deploying a reciprocal interview activity the instructors were focusing on establishing a climate of class based on student participation as a means to increase their engagement in the management subject.

The aim of this research work is to present the physical education students' feedback on a first day of class session of a management subject about: (1) identifying what activities carried out in the first session of class 'liked' or 'disliked' the students; (2) carrying out a Reciprocal Interview Activity as a tool to present the subject and the instructors to the students, in addition to engage and increase the motivation of the students through the interaction with their instructors, while enhancing the educational quality of the subject and the whole physical education program; and (3) evaluating the aforementioned Reciprocal Interview Activity.

## Context and background

Promoting student interaction with both their classmates and instructors is a practice encouraged in different fields and subjects (Petchamé et al., 2023; Urra, 2024), which can derive in a positive class climate that increases the students wellbeing (Pérez et al., 2022). Hence, stimulating interaction between class participants or deploying active learning tools may have a helpful impact on students (Allsop et al., 2020; Petchamé et al., 2024; Rivadeneira & Inga, 2023), potentially enhancing their motivation (Trolan et al., 2016), which closely linked to their desire to learn (Gómez-Barríos et al., 2024; Hernández et al., 2023; Romero et al., 2024).

### *First Day of Class Activities*

Preferences on what students 'like and dislike' to do during the first session of class of a subject have been identified in different studies (Bassett, 2011; Eskine & Hammer, 2017; Henslee et al., 2006; Perlman & McCann, 1999; Petchamé, Iriondo, Canaleta, et al., 2021; Petchamé, Iriondo, Villegas, et al., 2021). In doing that, firsts sessions of class may be designed considering the students' feedback as a starting point.

Diverse authors have published textbooks focused on the first sessions of a subject (McGlynn, 2001; McKeachie & Svinicki, 2013; Wolcowitz, 1984). The first session of class constitutes a relevant date for students and lecturers that just happens once (Anderson et al., 2011; Bruce, 2013; Foster & Hermann, 2011), and may impact on the whole course as highlighted in diverse research works (Deluse, 2018; Lane et al., 2021; Petchamé, Iriondo, Canaleta, et al., 2021; Robinson, 2019). First impressions matter, and of course, what is done during the first session of class may have a lasting effect on the course (Deluse, 2018; Jafar, 2021; Kreizinger, 2006; Lane et al., 2021; Ovid et al., 2021). Instructors may design the first session of class of subject with different objectives, such as: just explaining the syllabus of the subject or offering something else (Bruce, 2013; Iannarelli et al., 2010); focusing on engaging students (Petchamé, Iriondo, Canaleta, et al., 2021; Robinson, 2019); trying to motivate the students (McGinley &



Jones, 2014; Wilson & Wilson, 2007); or trying to establish a specific class climate or dynamic (Case et al., 2008; Lane et al., 2021). To achieve a specific objective, diverse tools have been used in different experiences, such as the one that was carried out in this research work: a reciprocal interview activity which proved its efficacy as explained in diverse research works (Case et al., 2008; Hermann & Foster, 2008; Petchamé, Iriondo, Canaleta, et al., 2021). However, other tools pursuing some specific goals have also proven their effectiveness during the first session of class—e.g., a lottery, as shown in Helmy (2016).

The Reciprocal Interview is an activity based on promoting the interaction between the instructor and the students, talking about a topic during the class session (Case et al., 2008; Hermann & Foster, 2008; Petchamé, Iriondo, Canaleta, et al., 2021). It can be designed through different steps: (1) briefly explaining the activity to the students; (2) creating groups of students; (3) offering examples of possible questions to be asked; (4) each group chooses a student to be the spokesperson, and then the group members discuss and agree on the questions they will ask the instructor; (5) conduct the reciprocal interview, which means that there are several question and answer sessions in which the instructor asks the students, and the students ask the instructor. As synthesized in Bengtsson (2016), this activity may be oriented, among others, to different objectives, such as: building awareness about students' or instructors' goals; gathering information in a comfortable climate; or enhancing student motivation.

### ***'Sport Management': Key elements included in the subject***

'Sport Management' is a 6-ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) compulsory subject taught in the sixth semester of the degree in Sciences of Physical Activity and Sport taught at the National Institute of Physical Education of Catalonia (INEFC)-Barcelona. In the same line of knowledge, the degree includes other elective subjects such as 'Sporting Management', 'Management of sport facilities', 'Management of sport events' or 'Management of leisure and tourism organizations'.

As explained in the syllabus of the subject 'Sport Management', it introduces the students to diverse topics, such as: (t1) economic environment for the management of sports organizations; (t2) strategic planning; (t3) organizational designs, Human Resources and personal career; (t4) marketing process; (t5) sports facilities management; (t6) quality, processes, and procedures; (t7) sports events and participation; and (t8) finance: the budgeting process. About the assessment of the subject, to successfully pass the course the students must take a final examination, in addition to deliver different assignments. The latter ones include: (a1) being able to propose and built the organizational chart of an organization; (a2) knowing how to take advantage of the 'mystery shopper' tool; (a3) proposing an event to generate revenue with social responsibility, discussed in front of their classmates and instructors; (a4) assessing the students' participation and their initiative in class, which weights 10% of their final grade. It should be highlighted that in terms of the final grade, student interaction plays a key role in activities (a3) and (a4).

## **Materials and Methods**

This section presents data on both, the surveyed participants, and the instrument that was used to collect their feedback on their first day of class activities.

### ***Participants***

The data presented in this research work was collected from the answers given by the undergraduate students in physical education who were enrolled in the subject 'Sport Management' in the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic courses. The number of students enrolled in the subject were 162 and 153 respectively in each academic course, collecting a total number of 227 answers from the students—124 in 2021-2022, and 103 in 2022-2023. Table 1 shows the distribution of the surveyed students in terms of gender.

In terms of the respondents' access studies, the students enrolled in the subject were distributed as shown in Table 2 below.



Table 1. Participants: Descriptive data in terms of gender

Gender	2021-2022	2022-2023
Female	26 21%	32 31%
Male	96 77%	71 69%
Nonbinary	2 2%	--
No answer	--	--
Total	124 100%	103 100%

Table 2. Participants: Descriptive data in terms of access studies

Access studies	2021-2022	2022-2023
CFGS*	51 41%	34 33%
Over 25 years old	2 2%	2 2%
PAU**	65 52%	65 63%
University Transfer	5 4%	2 2%
No answer	1 1%	--
Total	124 100%	103 100%

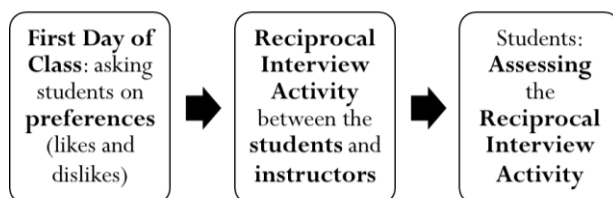
\*In Spanish, 'Ciclo Formativo de Grado Superior', equivalent to 'Certificate of Higher Education' in United Kingdom.

\*\*In Spanish, 'Pruebas de Acceso a la Universidad', equivalent to the 'University Entrance Exam'.

## Procedure

All the activities presented and analysed in this study were carried out in the first session of class of the subject 'Sport Management' and are synthesized in the Figure 1. A brief explanation of the session is described next. Once the lecturer entered in the classroom, he welcomed the students and told them that diverse activities were going to be done during the first session. The first activity consisted in asking the students about their preferred task to be done during this first day, as well as what they disliked. Following, a brief explanation about the syllabus of the subject was given by the lecturer and he told the students that a Reciprocal Interview Activity was going to be done next to complete all the information related to the subject through the questions that they asked. It should be mentioned that prior to the activity the instructor invested time in explaining how the Reciprocal Interview worked to the students. Once the activity ended, the students were requested to give their feed-back.

Figure 1. Main steps to collect information on the first day of class activities.



As explained previously, the students gave their opinion on their preferences about what they liked and disliked doing during the first session. To collect their feedback, a survey that included two open-ended questions to be answered concisely was used, as shown in Table 3. It should be noted that the answers of the respondents were collected through an online SurveyMonkey® questionnaire, which explicitly stated the following information regarding the survey: (1) responding the questions was totally voluntary; (2) requesting their consent to collect and treat their answers with the aim of improving future first day of classes of the subject, in addition to use the results in academic research; and (3) data collection and treatment was going to be done in an anonymously basis. The dataset collected from this first survey was processed and treated individually by three researchers. As a final step, they discussed their individual codifications in order to reach a consensus on the items through this triangulation process which allows to increase the validity of the findings (Bengtsson, 2016).

Table 3. Survey on liked and disliked activities to perform in the first session of class

Open-ended questions on first day about class activities
Q1. What activities do you like to do on the first day of class of a subject? *
Q2. What activities do you not like to do on the first day of class of a subject? *

\*In the survey, it was stated: "Express each idea in one line; ideally, in a maximum of five words per concept."

Once the physical education undergraduates completed the Reciprocal Interview Activity with the lecturer, they were asked to answer another SurveyMonkey® questionnaire that included the same heading regarding in terms of consent, collection and treatment of data. This survey, as shown in Table 4, included nine questions about their perceptions structured through a five-point Likert scale (Joshi et al., 2015; Likert, 1932); in addition, the survey incorporated one open-ended question at the end, to collect any additional comments or suggestions that the students might have had about the Reciprocal Interview Activity.

Table 4. Survey on the Reciprocal Interview Activity

5 point-Likert scale survey about the activity	
Value the comfort with the instructors' interaction	
C1. 'Talking with the instructor about the work'	
C2. 'Asking the instructor questions during the class session'	
C3. 'Talking to the instructor during tutoring hours'	
C4. 'Sending an e-mail to the instructor with questions'	
Value the students' comfort with the class participation	
P1. 'Participating in group activities during the class session'	
P2. 'Sharing ideas and opinions during the class session'	
P3. 'Performing group work activities outside class time'	
Evaluation of the activity	
E1. 'Would you recommend other instructors to do this activity at the beginning of the course?'	
E2. 'Did this activity seem to be a waste of time?'	
... the activity has helped me:	
H1. 'Understanding what was expected of the course'	
H2. 'To see the need to work hard to do well in the subject'	
H3. 'To feel more comfortable to participate in the class session'	
H4. 'To share concerns with the instructor'	
Would you like to add any comments? *	

\*Open-ended question

## Results

The students' preferences about the activities to be carried out during the first sessions is shown in Table 5, once they were surveyed as an initial activity. As previously explained, students completed this survey, which included two open-ended questions, before engaging in any kind of activity during their first session of class for the subject.

Table 5. Surveyed student' feelings on liked and disliked activities to perform during the first session of class. This table includes the items mentioned by at least the 3% of the valid answers.

Items	Like		Dislike	
	n	%	n	%
Describing assessments & grading	185	81.14		
General overview, syllabus & content	174	76.32		
Instructors: Introducing their background & experience	100	43.86	4	1.75
Objectives to be achieved by the students	70	30.70		
Utility of the subject	59	25.88		
Instructor: Motivating the students	51	22.37		
Generating interest on the subject	39	17.11		
Explaining the methodology	36	15.79		
Building a nice class climate	26	11.40		
Instructor: Knowing their students	25	10.96		
Instructor: Collecting students' expectations on the subject	24	10.53		
Icebreakers: Gamification, Kahoot...	22	9.65		
Instructor: Being clear and concise	20	8.77		
Answering questions about the subject	15	6.58		
Contextualizing the subject in the degree	14	6.14		
Instructor: Showing interest and enthusiasm with the subject	14	6.14		
Promoting students' participation during the session	12	5.26		
Testing the students' initial knowledge	12	5.26	13	5.70
Instructor: Showing proximity to the students	10	4.39		
Instructors: What they expect from the students	9	3.95		
Beginning subject content	7	3.07	83	36.40
Beginning subject content without prior introduction			44	19.30
Giving too much information during the first session			29	12.72
Instructor: bad attitude			28	12.28
Instructor: giving a monologue during the full session			22	9.65



Homework assignment	18	7.89
Instructor: Scaring the students	18	7.89
Performing boring activities during the session	18	7.89
Instructor: being too serious	15	6.58
Class takes up full session	12	5.26
Poor use of class time	12	5.26
Instructor: Just reading the assessment criteria	8	3.51
Instructor: Giving explanations too quick	8	3.51
Assuming that some knowledge is known by the students	7	3.07

Table 6 synthesizes the quantitative results derived from the answers to the surveyed questions asked through a five point-Likert scale. Diverse statistic parameters are shown, such as the mean and median scores, and the standard deviations, categorizing the items into distinct blocks and organizing them by academic years. The data is presented in three groups: (1) overall results encompassing all respondents; (2) Sport Management students from 2022; and (3) Sport Management students from 2023.

Table 6. Answers (C1 to C4, P1 to P3, E1 to E2, and H1 to H4): Means, medians and variances

Blocks		Mean	Median	SD	Mean	Median	SD	Mean	Median	SD	p-Value
		Aggregated data Both academic years			Sport Management 2021-2022			Sport Management 2022-2023			
Comfort with the instructors' interaction	C1.	3.56	4.00	0.90	3.58	4.00	0.92	3.53	4.00	0.88	0.804
	C2.	3.49	4.00	1.01	3.44	4.00	1.10	3.54	4.00	0.88	0.515
	C3.	3.28	3.00	1.05	3.37	3.00	0.99	3.16	3.00	1.12	0.278
	C4.	3.38	3.00	1.10	3.42	3.00	1.08	3.33	4.00	1.14	0.731
Comfort with class participation	P1.	3.57	4.00	0.87	3.59	4.00	0.82	3.54	4.00	0.94	0.884
	P2.	3.49	4.00	1.00	3.47	3.50	0.98	3.52	4.00	1.02	0.597
	P3.	3.09	3.00	1.07	3.11	3.00	1.00	3.06	3.00	1.15	0.969
Evaluation of the activity	E1.	3.71	4.00	1.04	3.83	4.00	1.03	3.57	4.00	1.04	0.053
	E2.	2.10	2.00	1.10	2.01	2.00	1.06	2.21	2.00	1.15	0.200
... the activity has helped me to:	H1.	3.18	3.00	0.94	3.32	3.00	0.93	3.00	3.00	0.91	0.015
	H2.	3.08	3.00	1.01	2.93	3.00	0.91	3.26	3.00	1.10	0.014
	H3.	3.27	3.00	1.06	3.35	3.00	1.04	3.19	3.00	1.08	0.288
	H4.	3.44	3.00	1.03	3.52	4.00	1.01	3.34	3.00	1.06	0.269

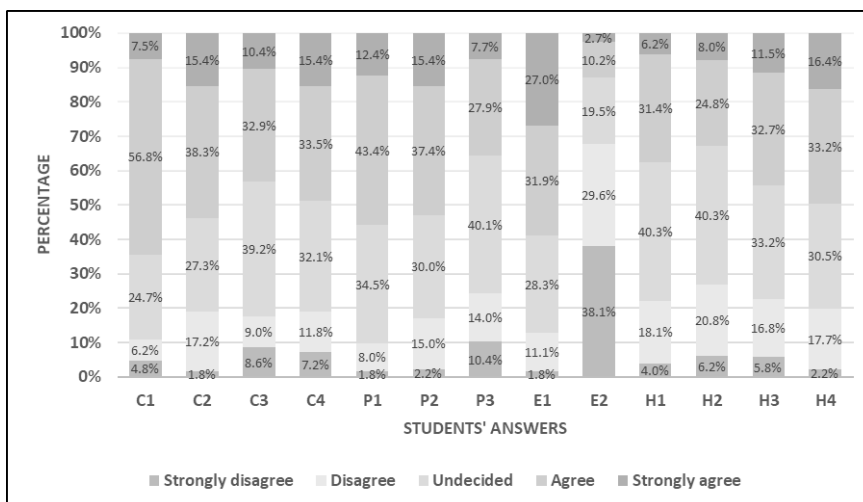
In this table, 'C' questions stand for 'Comfort', 'P' questions stand for 'Participation', 'E' questions stand for 'Evaluation' and 'H' questions stand for 'Help'. SD' stands for "Standard Deviation". The scores are associated with the following ratios: 5, 'Strongly agree'; 4, 'Agree'; 3, 'Undecided'; 2, 'Disagree'; 1, 'Strongly disagree'. Information on the differences between the two groups is given in the p-values.

As demonstrated in Table 6, the nonparametric Kruskal-Wallis test indicates that responses from students in both academic years are comparable. Despite minor discrepancies suggested by the p-values for E1, H1, and H2, it is reasonable to combine the two groups for analysis. Consequently, the results presented hereafter treat all student responses as a single dataset. Most mean values, as indicated in Table 6, hover around 3.2.

Figure 2 provides a visual representation of the data, showing the percentage distribution of responses for each question. A bar graph helps with the comparison of the options selected by the students. The dataset revealed the following Cronbach's alpha values: 'Comfort with approaching the instructor' (0.67), 'Student comfort with class participation' (0.49), and 'Evaluation of the Reciprocal Interview Activity' (0.66). With these values exceeding 0.4 and two nearing 0.7, the dataset shows internal consistency reliability (Taber, 2018). Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of responses across the five options (from 1 to 5) for each question. Notably, E2 ('Did this activity seem like a waste of time') was the only question to receive a negative score, which aligns with expectations.

Article text. Article text article text article text article text article text article text article text article text article text article text (Figure 1).

Figure 2. Answers to each surveyed item associated to each one of the five options (grey scale in Figure 2: 'Strongly agree', at the top of the columns; 'Strongly disagree, at the bottom of the columns).



Regarding the open-ended question included in the survey on the Reciprocal Interview Activity about the possibility of writing comments about the activity ('Would you like to add any comments?'), most respondents (203 out of 227) chose not to provide any feedback. Among the 24 respondents who did provide comments, twelve expressed positive feedback, noting the activity's effectiveness and engagement (e.g., "Good activity to start developing the student-teacher relationship", "Different and original way of presenting the subject", "It is noticeable that the instructors intend to meet the needs of the students and this is greatly appreciated, I felt listened to", ...). Conversely, four students voiced dissatisfaction with the activity (e.g., "I feel very uncomfortable talking or expressing my ideas within the class group with the lecturer listening" or "For next years I would not do this, as I think it is a waste of time"). Additionally, eight respondents indicated that some information was missing (e.g., "I did not get the important information, we will see in the official presentation and during the course", or "Even if it is written in the syllabus, we would like to know what assignments are to be handed in during the course, the percentages, the type of exam, etc.").

## Discussion

The positive effect of interaction between class participants has been previously studied in the context of physical education programs (Pérez et al., 2022; Urra, 2024). This section analyses the results obtained from two surveys conducted on two activities carried out through the first session of their first management course to third-year undergraduate students in physical activity and sport during the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic years. As explained in previous sections, both activities were deployed to enhance student engagement through interaction in a management subject that might initially be perceived by some students as quite distant from the core subjects of their studies.

The first activity performed by the physical education students was answering a survey about what they 'liked' and 'disliked' to do in the first session of a subject (see Table 5) to compare their preferences with findings obtained in research works in other programs (Bassett, 2011; Eskiné & Hammer, 2017; Henslee et al., 2006; Petchamé, Iriondo, Canaleta, et al., 2021; Petchamé, Iriondo, Villegas, et al., 2021). At the top of the list of the preferred items, students mentioned the 'grading system' (81.14% of the surveyed students), followed quite closely by a general overview and an explanation of the syllabus of the subject (76.32%). A remarkable number of students (43.86%) also mentioned that knowing diverse facts about the instructor (e.g., academic background, experience, interests...) was also appreciated. Other items highly assessed were to explain which objectives should be achieved by the students (30.70%), the utility of the subject (25.88%), motivating the students (22.37%), generating interest in the subject (17.11%), or explain the methodology deployed to teach the subject (15.79%). Conversely, the ranking of elements associated with what the students 'disliked' included at the top rank imparting subject content, as shown by the following answers: 'Beginning subject content' (36.40%) or 'Beginning subject content without prior introduction' (19.30%). Giving too much information (12.72%), scaring the student (7.89



%), or taking up the full session (5.26 %), were also mentioned as disliked items. The obtained results are consistent with the finding of other research studies focused on management subjects in an ICT engineering context—as shown in Petchamé et al. (2023)—, despite the differing percentages. The most remarkable difference is that the information about the grading system that is the top of the list was in the second position in Petchamé et al. (2023). In summary, students prefer the first session of a subject 'light' in terms of subject content (and preferably not beginning subject content), where the instructor summarizes the grading criteria, the syllabus and briefly introduces the subject, in addition to present himself. The instructor is also required to generate interest in the topic and motivating the students, which in the end are elements closely related to engaging the students in the subject. These findings seem to reinforce the idea that the instructors should clearly explain in this first session how students are going to be graded. However, it can be mentioned that students had the grading criteria already available in the web page once they enrolled. Hence, requiring this oral explanation could derive from not having read these criteria in advance, not being clear about what is going to be asked once they have read the syllabus, or even despite understanding the criteria, wanting to confirm what was written.

The second activity was a Reciprocal Interview between the students and the instructors, based on the interaction between both parties to promote the student engagement in the 'Sport Management' subject, which was their very first contact with management topics in the academic program. Once the activity was completed, the students were surveyed, and the main results summarized in Table 6. All the answers about the first block ('comfort with the instructor'; from C1 to C4) and the second one ('comfort with class participation'; P1 and P2) were assessed with mean values close to 3.5 by the students, followed quite closely by P3 (mean value, 3.09). In fact, C1 and C2 (which deal with talking and asking questions to the instructor), were two of the items that raised spontaneously during the first survey, as shown in Table 5. As previously shown, Figure 2 presents the percentages of students who assessed the activity based on questions regarding their comfort with the instructor and the class participation, and only a few of them qualified as 'disagree' or 'highly disagree' the items (C1 and P1, around 11%; C2, C3, C4, P2, P3, around 18%), which means that the majority of the students have perceived value from the activity through items that create engagement, an idea confirmed with the answers to E1 and E2. Finally, about the last block of the questionnaire ('... the activity has helped me to'), the most valued item highest was H4 ('To share concerns with the instructor'), followed closely by the other options. Thus, it can be stated that this activity was positively valued by the students, in line with other research works (Case et al., 2008; Hermann & Foster, 2008; Petchamé, Iriondo, Canaleta, et al., 2021).

The main implication of this research work is that by means of a 'first session of class' carefully designed by the instructors, the student engagement can be enhanced through the interaction between students and instructors (in the experience presented in this research work, using a reciprocal interview activity). In addition, it should be noted that all the activities were designed to present the subject and the instructor to the students in an environment in which students could be present in the classroom, since they participated actively in all the activities—i.e., students' feelings and opinions were heard by the instructor through their active participation and the items collected through two surveys.

This study has several limitations, presented as follows. Firstly, we have surveyed third-year physical activity and sport undergraduates, since this is the very first year in which the subject is taught. Considering the students' feedback collected in this work, it should be interesting to survey fourth-year students. In this case, the focus of the reciprocal interview activity could be different, and not necessarily oriented to promote engagement through interaction, since it was already created in the third year when the students had their first contact with the topic. Secondly, this study is focused on physical education students. The obtained results may be different in other field of study—e.g., in ICT engineering, as shown in Petchamé et al. (2023). Therefore, specific studies in each field of interest are advisable to be done. Thirdly, the surveyed students have suffered the restrictions derived from the COVID-19 pandemic, and we cannot account all the effects of this exceptional situation. Other surveys on third-year students that have accessed to the university in a post-COVID period will shed light on this issue.

## Conclusions

This research work was focused on collecting undergraduate physical activity and sport students' perceptions during their first session of class in the context of the first management subject in which they



were enrolled. Promoting students' engagement and motivation regarding management topics may help them learn about this topic which is relevant to succeed in the labour market (DeLuca & Braunstein-Minkove, 2016; Vidal-Vilaplana et al., 2023). To do that, a first day of class for the first management subject that physical education undergraduates took, was specifically designed to promote students' interaction with their instructors.

On one hand, a survey about their perceptions about what activities they liked and also the ones that they disliked was done to compare results with research works in other fields (Bruce, 2013; Lane et al., 2021; Petchamé et al., 2023). Findings suggests that most of the students preferred a session where the grading criteria, a general overview and the syllabus of the subject were clearly explained to them. In addition, a great number of students were interested in knowing about the instructor, which highlights the importance of the instructors' presentation during the first session. Utility of the subject and motivating students were also items that showed at the top of the list. Regarding the facts that they disliked, starting to explain topics of the subject from the very first session is at the top of the rank. On the other hand, results from the Reciprocal Interview Activity offer the conclusion that the activity was appreciated by a significant number of students, which reinforces the idea that this tool can be very useful to promote students' interaction with the instructor from the very first day of class of a subject.

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### Authors' and translators' details:

Josep Petchamé	josep.petchame@salle.url.edu	Author
Joshua Muñoz	joshuamunozv@gmail.com	Author
Francesc Genovard	francescgesu@hotmail.es	Author
Odalys Torné	torneescude@wisc.edu	Author / Translator
Francesc Solanellas	fsolanellas@gencat.cat	Author