

**BODY EDUCATION IN
THE SCHOOL CONTEXT:
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC
VIEW**

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Abstract: The research took place in a school institution whose body formation is not limited to Physical Education, all students have in their curriculum classes in arts workshops (music, theater, body and visual arts). In this context, the research sought to interpret the subjects' actions, their speeches, their relationships, seeking to understand and unveil the meanings attributed to the actions that are structured in the school's daily life, in the development of activities intentionally programmed for the students' body formation. Therefore, this study is characterized as a qualitative research of an ethnographic nature, as it was concerned with understanding the community studied from the description of reality, through the direct contact of the researchers with the object of study. The results show that the school still faces challenges in the construction of a project that thinks the corporal formation, as the lack of a systematized work and the opening of dialogue with the professionals of other areas, mainly of the Physical Education. positive in the space of building democratic projects in education.

Keywords: School context, Corporal Formation, Ethnography.

INTRODUCTION

According to Saviani (1989, p.26) reflections on Brazilian education were intense soon after the period of political opening. In the field of Physical Education (PE), we are experiencing the same period of ebullition and desire to transform what was established, that is, the authoritarian culture disseminated by the state of exception. In fact, from the 1980s onwards, the social function that the educational system had been performing began to be questioned and criticized by progressive sectors of society. This criticism denounced the reproductive role of the educational system, since it

contributed to the reproduction of current models and the status quo.

These transformations are the result of theoretical reflections, debates and theoretical and ideological clashes within the PE field. However, the task of changing, of transforming a reality, presents many obstacles. On the one hand, we have problems of a macrostructural nature, in which economic, political and cultural determinants act. On the other hand, we have problems and obstacles at the microstructure level, that is, those linked to the specific plane of the actors who make up the school. It is from this universe that we can intervene, otherwise we will fall into impotence for believing that change can only come from the transformation of social macrostructures. "It can be seen, however, that the adherence of these proposals is broad in the academic environment, but still very small among those who are active in school institutions". In fact, the accumulation of proposals is not accompanied by effective changes in the school routine." (Lovisol, 1995, p. 41).

For Pereira (2001) The problem of utility and prestige conferred on PE is present in Brazil, at least since its insertion in school curricula. However, the social representation of PE in the school curriculum is a fact that must be taken into account in the development of the discipline at school. This way, we will only be able to solve the impasses and the specific problems of the disciplines if we think about our questions within the school communities. Only starting from a database of school dynamics, with its singularities, will we be able to change or improve existing curricula. Let's note that:

"Intervention discourses by experts often claim scientific status. However, the foundation in terms of empirical research is usually low, and even null. The experts participating in the debates intend to impose their points of view without presenting,

'usually', data or evidence that allow us to reach some agreements, which allow us to improve education in Brazil". (Lovisol, 1995, p.42).

Based on this assumption, the research seeks to answer the following question: how does PE participate in the Corporal Formation project? To answer the question, we seek to interpret the actions of the subjects, their speeches, their relationships, seeking to understand and unveil the meanings attributed to the actions that are structured in the daily life of the school, in the development of activities intentionally programmed for the students' body formation.

METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out in the context of a private school in the city of Rio de Janeiro. of the researcher with the object of study, and with the use of techniques that involve field recording, interview, documents, photographs. According to Woods (1987, p.18) the term derives from anthropology and literally means "description of the way of life of the individual or group of individuals", that is, interested in what people do, how they behave and relate to each other.

However, the interest of this study is to observe the bundle of relationships that took place in the scenario of a school, from the actors involved, directly or indirectly, with the project of corporal formation (all actions intentional and systematized by the school in order to create opportunities for learning of expressive skills, body techniques and recreational activities in the school space). Thus, the instruments for collecting and analyzing the data used were participant observation, field diary, interviews (teachers, management and employees), documents and photographs.

THE BODY EDUCATION PROJECT

Here, body training is understood as all the systematic and intentional practices that the school offers to its students in order to provide body/artistic/sports experiences that develop creativity, expressiveness, subjectivity and aesthetic feelings to the cultural activities developed. Therefore, I was not concerned with other processes of interaction in the school space, where the student's body is educated, disciplined and controlled by the norms of society and school culture in an "almost natural" way (Foucault, 2002). Thus, it is known that the time that students are sitting in "banking classes" of mathematics or science, paraphrasing Paulo Freire, are also being socialized in a certain culture that shapes their bodies, attitudes and feelings. However, this was not the focus of observation. Our concern was with activities intentionally managed pedagogically.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASSES

PE is mandatory from the first year of elementary school and all teachers of this activity concluded their undergraduate course in the 1980s, in the city of Rio de Janeiro. That is, they graduated from the "old curriculum", prepared before Resolution n. 03/87 of the CNE. According to Bracht (2002, p.13), this means that these professionals do not represent the new training paradigm implemented by the Resolution. The first segment (mini nursery to kindergarten III) does not have physical education classes with specialists. The body activities are worked on by the regent teachers, assisted at times by teacher Márcia (a high school "body class" teacher, without training in PE). Let's take a look at the coordinator's description:

"Body work with children is developed by the regent teachers, where we emphasize self-knowledge related to daily life related to the child. The main objective is to work

on the knowledge of one's own body, the body expressing and communicating. The strategies used to achieve the objective revolve around games and games, the development of sensory perceptions, the use of different materials freely or suffering interference from the teacher, but always equipped with a pedagogical intention". (Coordinator Sol.D.C.24-09-2002).

Even without the follow-up of an EF professional, the first segment has been performing quality work that could not have been done in any other way. Freire (1988) states that from the motor point of view, even before the emergence of a verbal language, all the basic motor schemes are already formed.

The second segment (CA to the 5th year of elementary school) has PE classes with specialized teachers who divide the work as follows: in the year in which the Olympics are held (an event that takes place every two years) the content worked is the game (competitive, cooperative, rules, etc.), aiming for students to acquire vast knowledge, carry out modifications and re-readings about the games, in addition to acquiring new motor skills. In the year in which the Olympics do not take place, classes are worked using as content acrobatics, juggling, body expression, Olympic gymnastics and yoga, aiming at expanding the students' bodily experiences. At the end of the year, representing the culmination of this program that has several body languages, the teachers promote an event called "Show of the Body". In it, the students of the second segment perform a presentation to the other classes of the school, showing a sequence of movements of one of the contents worked during the school year.

The project "Mostra do Corpo" seems to fill the gap in the diversity of body languages by providing body training beyond the limits of the field traditionally defined as PE, an aspect that seems to be valued by the school and very positive in the training of students.

In the third and fourth segments (6th year of elementary school to 3rd year of high school), the work is more focused on pre-sports games and sports. From the 3rd segment (6th to 9th of elementary school) students have in the school curriculum, classes in arts workshops (music, plastic arts, theater and body), a factor that makes Physical Education return its work almost completely for sports initiation practices and games.

It is also verified that the students in PE classes, even having as a preference to work with the sport, seek to diversify their knowledge, expanding the possibilities with other experiences. We noticed that the classes take place in an organized way, with the encouragement of participation (which starts from the planning of the annual contents) of all and without excessive concern with sports techniques and great skills.

THE ART WORKSHOPS

According to Interministerial Ordinance No. 073, of June 21, 2001, art. 1: "Physical Education is a mandatory curricular component of basic education, being optional, in evening courses". However, the work of the art workshops is only legitimized by the will of Director Maria and the community that, as we will see later, is the creator and the biggest supporter of this project in the institution. The team of teachers of the arts workshops is formed by professional artists from different areas (actors, musicians, choreographers, plastic artists) who believe that the work developed in the Institution is focused on the "I", that is, that it is a work more linked to feeling and creating, seeking to develop subjectivity in students (according to the pedagogical policy proposal previously reported). This team, in the sense of demarcating the differences between its work and that carried out by the EF, ends up conceptualizing that:

"PE, is focused on doing, for the practice of sport, they would be concerned with body expression and with the development of the students' subjectivity". (report of the physical education teacher).

On the one hand, we have PE teachers reporting their displeasure with the teachers of the workshops due to the total removal of these professionals, creating the non-integration of the work. The exceptions are the events where everyone presents their work, however, without the slightest exchange and with total formality. On the other hand, we have the teachers of the arts workshops who are happy with the work carried out (with the full approval of the community) and with the group of teachers of the other subjects. According to the drama teacher's account:

"Our group is very united, we do a lot of work together. Some time ago, a teacher from the arts workshop even tried to bridge the gap with PE teachers, but it didn't work out, and today, we don't have any contact" (interview with the theater teacher)

This power relationship between PE teachers and those from the arts workshop has been present in the school for a long time, but it is clear that the teachers of the arts workshop are prestigious by Director Maria and the community and rarely talk about the subject. However, they reveal an insecurity in the hegemony of complementary disciplines, as they are not guaranteed by any educational law, only by a project of the director. Such evidence can be seen in the speeches of director Maria herself:

"this group at various times in the school perform beautiful presentations, acquiring great admiration and prestige from the school community. This group is very, very good in terms of production."

The Arts project, according to the report of Director Maria, began when she took over

the Pedagogical Director of the institution in 1987. The Director brought with her a proposal for the project of simultaneity and choices, where students could choose the artistic language with which they would like to get involved, whose objective was to combat a very intellectual and rational formation that was still dominant in the school. This proposal initially included music, visual arts and theater workshops. Over the years, the visual arts workshop focused on film and video was incorporated into the project. However, due to financial difficulties experienced by the institution in maintaining the equipment of the film and video workshop, after internal discussions, this workshop was replaced by the plastic arts workshop. Later, with the expansion of the project, the body workshop was introduced, whose work is focused on body languages and body expression, with a wide scope, which brings together from work with classical dance to mountaineering.

The students' internship in the workshops in the initial grades is part of an experience in all modalities so that when they reach the 8th grade, they can choose the workshop that they like the most, for the deepening of this "language". According to the report of Director Maria: "In high school, it opens with a pattern of deepening. They love it and they don't run any risk of being left without the workshop, because I value this training a lot, otherwise we become big heads, just big heads". In the 6th and 7th grade classes, students cannot choose the workshops they wish to participate in and are divided by the institution's criteria so that, at the end of these two years, they have gone through all four modalities. Through this procedure, we noticed that the teachers do not work with groups in each class, but with groups of students of the years.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As seen, the corporal formation in the studied school institution is not limited to PE, because as we perceive all the students, from the 1st year of elementary school, have classes in the arts workshops (music, theater, body and plastic arts classes). The school project becomes, according to the actors, an alternative to the very intellectual and rational training common in most schools. The school intends to train students with skills of expression, reflection and action in the context of experiences they experience at school and outside it. They intend to form “true citizens”, in the words of the director.

Direct observation in the arts workshop cannot be carried out, because, as reported, the presence of a researcher identified with the PE area revealed conflicts and tensions between the disciplines and activities that make up the school's body training project.

On the other hand, one could reflect on whether the culture, or rather, the habitus in the teaching activity, allows this long-awaited integration between the disciplines and activities in the school space. Since integration seems to be a demand present in the discourses of teachers and directors or a value that goes beyond the walls of the school, why can't we do it? What are the social, epistemological and pedagogical mechanisms that act preventing the realization of this value? Despite the veiled conflicts that arise, it is noted that the Institution is concerned with providing ample training for its students in different languages besides the traditional ones that end up being confused with the very idea of school, such as science, mathematics, etc.

PE at the Institution is mandatory from the second segment of the 1st year of elementary school and it is not yet mandatory to participate in the arts workshop (with the exception of music classes, developed

by specialized teachers) makes PE expand its planning, including activities aimed at towards a more artistic, more holistic language, aiming to fill this gap. This expansion concerns the languages that will later be worked on in the workshops. This report reflects an old problem in the PE area: what can be demarcated as a specificity of PE teaching at school? With this we can conclude that the school is profiled in the construction of a project that thinks the corporal formation still faces challenges such as the lack of a systematized and integrated plan, of dialogue with the PE professionals and of other areas in the construction of a curriculum that indicates the specifics of the pedagogical work to be carried out in the different disciplines and activities, as well as in the achievement of general objectives fundamental to the formation of students.

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