

Physical Education at school and dance: perceptions of elementary school teachers

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Abstract: This article presents data and discussions related to a research carried out to understand how physical education teachers perceive the syllabus of dance as a Physical Education school subject. Data collected points out especially to issues related to initial education and its implication in the way of dealing with this subject in school. Neglect of the teaching of dance as one of the subjects of Physical Education stood out. It reinforces the necessity of extending and deepening discussions so that dance becomes effective in schools.

Keywords: Dance. Physical Education. Elementary education.

1 INTRODUCTION

Presently, there are a large number of researches investigating the phenomenon of dance within the education context, where issues pertaining to the legitimacy of dance in Physical Education is discussed, as well as its contributions to body-related practices as and aesthetics experience.

The increase of research endeavoring to address dance shows the importance of this theme that has been neglected for a long time both by schools and teachers. Issues related to the syllabus (BRASILEIRO, 2003), to the education context (MARQUES, 2001, 2005) and to dance as an aesthetic experience (SARAIVA *et al.*, 2005a, 2005b) are some examples of the discussions that investigate this phenomenon that insists

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on “being present” in schools, despite the many teachers that deny their responsibility for the role they play in teaching it.

The purpose of this study is to provide contributions to discussions addressing the role of dance in schools by presenting data collected to identify how primary school Physical Education teachers perceive the syllabus of dance in their classes.

2 METHODOLOGY: RESEARCH PATH AND SUBJECTS

Physical Education teachers were interviewed in order to understand and above all to inquire about dance as part of the syllabus of Physical Education taught in schools.

The historical construction of this subject in the school milieu takes place via the teachers’ praxis in relation to their students and in relation to the historical-social context where it takes place. Therefore, more than describing and identifying the ideas of teachers-interviewees, the challenge was to perceive the implicit messages, the contradictory dimensions and the unspoken but latent themes (LÜDKE; ANDRÉ, 1986) in data provided by the interviewees, in order to understand the texts and contexts of the dance problem in schools.

To this end, an interpretative investigation was carried out to understand the different meaning within the scope of the natural reality in social interactions, where unique, unexpected and different aspects were focused on, according to Perez Gómez (1998). This interpretative approach¹ applied to the study enabled the authors to probe the complexity of the issue that interfaces with social reality, where different analyses arose from collected data.

The study was drafted based on the understanding that dance as an element of the culture of movement, which is a phenomenon that provides a wealth of possibilities for body-

¹ Pérez Gómez (1998) points out to this type of study opposed to the positivist approach that generally seeks the abstract generalization of a lasting truth regardless of the context.

related, social and affective experiences – plays a special role in human education. Dance is conducive to different aesthetics experiences that foster “sensitivity expansion as the ability to perceive the world, making it possible to experience it, ponder on it and recreated it” (SARAIVA *et al.*, 2005b, p. 61).

In being aware of this fact, questioning proceeded with the purpose of exploring and finding meanings got the praxis of Physical Education teachers in order to understand the present and to look into the future of dance as a school subject.

A questionnaire with semi-open questions about the teachers’ education and their pedagogical practice was drawn up. Firstly, this research tool underwent a pilot study phase to evaluate the outreach of the questions in relation to the goals of the study. Then, some of the questions were rewritten and only then were they submitted to the study subjects for data collection.

The field of research was established based on a sample that was obtained to represent the different realities of municipal schools. Therefore, seven schools were selected, of which two are considered large (700 to 1,000 students), two medium (300 to 700 students) and three small (90 to 300 students). Data was provided by the municipal Education Department.

The study involved all Physical Education teachers from these schools, totaling 16 teachers: 7 men and 9 women. Of these, three were in the 18-27 years old age bracket, eleven in the 28-37 years old age bracket and two in the 38-47 years old age bracket. All live in the municipality of Chapecó, in the State of Santa Catarina.

In terms of the level that the interviewees teach, they encompass Childhood Education until the last grades of Elementary School, where seven teachers work with the former levels (1st to 4th grade) and five 5 teachers work with students from the 5th and 8th grade of Elementary School, and the remaining four work with all levels.

The next item addressed the relationship of interviewees with dance as a syllabus subject during early education. Of the all

teachers, eleven stated that dance was included as a subject of their graduate course, where nine said that the content was significant for their education. Only two believed that dance was poorly covered in their graduate courses. The remaining five teachers said it was never part of their syllabus as such, but that they had other subjects that contained a few related elements, i.e. Rhythmic Activities, Rhythmic Gymnastics and Folklore.

The next questions focused in the study's core issue, e.g. dance content as a subject of Physical Education in schools, and their purpose was to find its relevance both for the school and in terms of the relationship between the teacher and dance as a subject. To this end, eleven teachers answered that they develop dance but not systematically. These teachers reported that dance is usually done when there is an event or a celebration. The other five teachers informed that they work with dance in their Physical Education classes.

The first data obtained characterized the group of teachers, identifying them in the investigation scenario; with the collected reference about their training in dance, the teachers' answers were assessed in order to identify their differences and common ideas. Researchers also attempted to read between the lines of data, presented hereunder as a transcript of oral statements in order to carry out the exercise suggested by Freire (1996), as the pedagogical milieu and the pedagogical practice are texts that should be constantly read, interpreted, written and rewritten.

3 DANCE AT SCHOOLS: TENSIONS BETWEEN EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION

In the data analysis process, a series of significant elements arose to understand the problem, and in this text presents the core issue identified in the teachers' answers, e.g. the implication of their initial education.

Many interviewees stated that Dance was part of their syllabus in the Physical Education graduate course, but that it was not significant in their opinion, which caused them to need to find the “whys”. According to some answers, these teachers found the content unsatisfying because their contact with dance “only during one term of the graduate course was very rushed” (Teacher M), and also because “it could’ve been covered more comprehensively to be more successful in schools” (Teacher E).

Evidence was similar to results obtained by Saraiva *et al.* (2007), where teachers also point out to the lack of dance experience, both in their private lives and early education, as a limiting element to develop this content in their classes. However, some interviewees said that the content of Dance as a graduate course subject was significant, where in some cases “body expression was quite developed” (Teacher A).

In relation to the content of Dance as a subject taught in Physical Education graduate courses some consideration should be made. Firstly, it is understood that the syllabus of Physical Education courses is designed in a manner that is not conducive to a deeper teaching of specific dance style techniques, and also that this should not be the objective of the training. However, as presented above, it is possible that other studies on Dance-education or Dance-improvisation² should be construed as experience whereby “another life form is revealed as movement”, according to Saraiva (2005, p. 239), constituted as another form of living and being in the world, which is the symbol of what was experienced and/or imagined, possible to every individual.

To this end, the dance experience should be construed as the possibility of representing all experiences lived, constituting a relational process of the body in movement, which as a dance phenomenon should be perceived in a different manner, i.e. as a means of experiencing and showing

² Ver Fiamoncini e Saraiva (1998), Soares et al. (1998), etc.

oneself to the world. This outlook brings the idea that when experimenting dance we are able to expressing in a unique manner how we understand the world around us and how we can express emotions and feelings, without necessarily mastering a specific dance technique. Hence, we have addressed dance to be discussed and developed in the education milieu, more specifically in Physical Education, such as dance that enables the subjects to expresses their point of view in relation to their world built from their own experiences, given that “each person has a different relationship with dance depending on their subjective experience and social reality” (SARAIVA, 2005, p. 232).

Under this perspective teacher education should focus on understanding dance and its supporting concepts that include experience aesthetics as the main pillar to the process, which is capable of releasing a myriad of potentials of the human being. This type of experience develops an “aesthetics awareness that is not the prerogative of artists, but of everyone that dares to experiment new possibilities” (SARAIVA-KUNZ, 2003, p. 71).

The concept of dance within this dimension would prevent Physical Education teachers from feeling they are unprepared to include dance in their classes. Statements such as “I don’t have enough experience and knowledge to face the challenge of teaching dance” (Teacher L), and “I’m not prepared enough to teach classes” (Teacher I) would not arise so often if one could perceive in their own body the ability of expressing oneself, which is part of human facticity that is part the makings of both individuals and the world. This condition can be re-dimensioned via the dance experience.

In addition to poor initial training, repeatedly mentioned by teachers, another factor that arises is “teachers’ huge lack of interest in learning and working with dance” (Teacher P). This statement points out to a factor that seems to be one of the greatest hurdles before dance can become a usual and widespread practice in schools, which is possible under the

ongoing education approach. Given that a considerable number of teachers declared that they did not get enough training in the graduate course, it is mandatory to seek knowledge to complement the gap by taking courses, doing research and reading books. This applies not only to dance, but also to any content and/or subject. Knowledge production nowadays surpasses that of any time in history, and its dissemination is also accelerated. Thus, the lack of knowledge can be remedied if not totally then partially through ongoing education, which can be construed as joining improvement courses or even self-learning. Other studies also identified that lack of interest of teachers as one of the factors responsible for the negligent teaching of dance in schools. The study by Saraiva *et al.* (2007a, p. 152) purports that:

[...] teachers acknowledge that dance has been neglected in learning institutions and the reasons given [...] were: lack or poor experiences related to dance, in their private lives and during their initial education (college) and low level of desire as the main demotivating factor to have a better performance in teaching dance in schools.

However, data obtained for this study showed that actually teachers either do not feel any rapport with dance or lack any wish to teach: “I feel no rapport in relation to dance compared comfortable I am with sports” (Teacher O). Likewise, some of the harshest reasons given not to teach dance in Physical Education classes were: “lack of knowledge about dance and body expression” (Teacher F), or “lack of enough knowledge” (Teacher I) and also “because I don’t like it and I don’t feel comfortable teaching it” (Teacher P).

The answers are considered ‘harsh’ because to a certain extent teachers refrain from adopting two fundamental teaching practices that are conducive to fostering dignity to individuals; ergo, they display their apparent conformism. The first is the desire to expand their portfolio of knowledge, which is very important and decisive for teaching. It should be in place as ongoing action-thinking-action – doing and

thinking of what was done – as advocated by Freire (1996), where this chain of events is construed as a basic need for critical teaching. Under this situation the teacher plays an investigative role in the different situation arisen during the pedagogical process and becomes aware that teaching requires researching, and researching requires teaching (FREIRE, 1996).

The second is characterized by the required offer; in relation to Physical Education, comprehensive experience in contemporary body-related practices. A closer examination will show that currently body-related practices go beyond sports. Health focused nature-related activities, and martial arts to mention but a few examples, require a new perspective from Physical Education teachers. It is necessary to understand this movement that in general terms aims at (re)integrating the human being with their biological and cultural nature, both as individuals and collectively. It is necessary to point out the commitment between Physical Education and activities that are conducive to education people. This contribution is closely associated with expanding the outreach of body-related practices, as they must be relevant to the person that performs, discovers and builds upon each different modality. Only then will it be possible to see the ‘big picture’ that is a requirement in the process of giving re-significance to their movements according to the context at hand. It is understood that the repertoire of movements of an individual contains new forms of polissemic body language that ensue from the natural and social environment, which confers countless different meanings, whereby “the environment itself is reconstructed based experience and by sharing it, thus acquiring new meanings” (SILVA; DAMIANI, 2005, p. 195).

This approach sheds light on the importance of offering experiments with body-related practices – hereunder focused on dancing – that expands the repertoire of an individual’s movements, the dialogue with his or he own body and the body of other individuals, thus providing a deeper knowledge of the world where they live. To this end, teachers should not

let their negative personal opinion of dance affect the possibilities for the collectivity.

It is important to note that the statements affirming that they do not teach dance “for lack of rapport”, i.e. not liking it or because they “do not feel comfortable” were proffered by male teachers. Perhaps this is evidence of a strong prejudice that still lurks in the dance milieu where men are involved, given that in the history of dance a significant number of dancers had and/or have homosexual orientation (HANNA, 1999). However, the assessment of homosexuality within the dance milieu is not the subject-matter under this study’ the purpose hereof is to address dance as a phenomenon that becomes concrete through the language of human movement.

Dance is realized via the transformation/re-significance of human movement, which in itself is gender-free. Both men and women use the same group of muscles to walk run, jump, swim, and also to dance, and the difference between each movement in both genders depends on “the emotion each individual imprints on expressing it” (NANNI, 1995, p. 130), and on “the identifying impasse of body-related practices”, according to Fraga (1995). In his investigation carried out with adolescents that underwent a comparative assessment between playing soccer and dancing the author found that

[...] the absolute masculine power acknowledged in this game given its aggressive, virile and competitive nature became diluted among both genders when it was included as a school activity, buffering these traits for the boys and frequently bringing them out in the girls (FRAGA, 1995, p. 38).

Likewise, the author reports that “boys became less anxious in the direct proportion as they established a rapport with dancing” (FRAGA, 1995, p. 39), as dance music was involved, which became gender-free in the ‘80s underwent, a process similar to street dance nowadays.

At any rate, studies carried out over a decade ago reveal the possibilities of reinterpreting gender roles in dance, first and foremost to give it a different meaning for boys and girls, given that:

in every culture there are no body-related practices that in themselves carry the meaning of gender. Furthermore, there are also transformations ensuing from cultural dynamics within a society, which take us to the semantics that are part of the process where the configuration of social identity occurs, including those that are based on gender (FRAGA, 1995, p. 40-41).

Hence, there is a consensus whereby prejudice is associated with the mindset that creativity and sensitivity are “skills” of the female universe, which has been disseminated by modern society; thus, the reference or belief that male dancers in a historical-social construction of the widespread logic that men who dance have homosexual orientation is ingrained in the male universe. Since the study carried out by Leitão and Sousa (1995) on “*O homem que dança...*” [The man that dances...], as well as Western classical interpretations of “what is appropriate for men to do”, euphemistically listing everything that “is not appropriate” as attributes of men that have homosexual orientation (BURT, 1995), to this day dance is perceived as “emotionally” expressive, which in the general mindset is a feminine attribute. According to Burt (1995), some emotions are associated with masculinity, while others seem to be feminine, whereby it is common to hear that men are more rational and have more control over their emotions than women.

However, it should be noted that to a certain extent, some teachers realized they needed to expand their knowledge of dance: “I feel I need to know more in order to improve my teaching and to improve as a professional” (Teacher J), and “I would like to be able to teach dance, but not because I have to” (Teacher I). These statements reveal that in addition to the poor knowledge about dance there is also a measure of

criticism when a male teacher states “but not because I have to”, possibly referring to the fact that dance is a “girly thing”³ that does not to be supervised by a teacher. Therefore, these statements translate the need to know what is being dances and not just dancing to any random music.

Under this perspective, experiences have confirmed that ongoing education can bring teachers closer to the universe of dance, showing that based of their actual experience with dance it is possible to

perceive and understand how dance steps become a body experience to their students, i.e. it is possible to understand the possibilities, anxiety and difficulties that are part of performing the tasks when applied to teaching this subject (SARAIVA, 2007a, p. 154-155).

4 BOYS DON'T DANCE! WE HAVE NO PLACE! THESE HURDLES MUST BE OVERCOME

All teachers interviewed for this study noted that boys do not join dance-related activities. Some teachers believe that one of the hurdles than hinder the implementation of dance in Physical Education classes is the “resistance of some students, especially boys” (Teacher H and Teacher J).

The lack of other references for dance styles imprints in the social mindset that ballet dancing is dance itself, despite new trends, such as hip hop, street dance, *forró* etc., which are more common in urban, help reinforcing the stereotype of the ballet dancing male. There are studies that point to an encouraging factor to initiate boys in dance (ARNOV, s/d; FRAGA, 1995; STINSON, 1998), e.g. to transfer body movements related to sports as dance steps. These steps require strength, vigor and can be used as a strategy by the

³ Typically, during dance presentations or a school event “the girls” take the initiative of choreographing the performance.

teacher in order to introduce them to this type of body language. Stinson (1998a, p. 60) comments on his teaching strategy:

I frequently start my classes for 10 year olds and up with activities that are related both to sports and dancing [...] I can see how the boys are surprised when they realize they enjoy dancing, at least this kind of dancing.

Also, in order to enable dance in a less intimidating manner for boys, the author affirms in another text that “it is necessary to have an early - although it is not enough - and that dance must be taught to boys in a pleasant manner that does not threaten their masculinity” (STINSON, 1998b, p. 68). This can be attained when the experience with dance during takes place pre-school, expanding body-related references and experiences and helping understand that this activity is compatible for both genders, given that dance “plays a significant role in the building of the male and female stereotypes during childhood” (BOND, 1998, p. 50).

In his interesting work, Bond (1998, p. 52) observed a group of children wearing masks while dancing. The author reveals that by using masks it was possible to “temporarily keep at bay gender-related inhibitions and to allow the expanded sense of individuality to flourish.” This could be another strategy to bring boys closer to dancing and to introduce them to street dancing that was widely disseminated into our culture in the ‘90s. This dance style explores skills such jumping, falling, twisting, making great turns, and quick and coordinated moves. Every move can bring dance and sports closer together, as well as the rediscovery of *capoeira* that can be considered a fight or a dance equally abundant in athletic steps and that is a genuinely Brazilian cultural manifestation.

By far, the existing references about dance are fundamental to make the choice of wanting/liking to take it up or not. For this reason, this approach might be the road for boys to feel encouraged to dance, and based on their first

experience when they realize that they “are still boys”, they could allow themselves to try different possibilities and to decrease their level of “lack of interest and inhibition that most boys have in relation to dancing” (Teacher O).

Teachers point to another hindrance to developing dance in schools, e.g. lack of and adequate venue for teaching. This lack of structure was highlighted as an obstacle to teaching dance:

We are three teachers with three classes that have to use the same sports court. There is no room available; hence, dance is only performed during celebrations and not as part of a regular class (Teacher K).

“There is no dedicated venue where music can be played louder, as well as a room that is adequate for moving around” (Teacher O). Both statements reveal the need for ideal facilities where dance can be developed. It is a well-known fact that most public schools in Brazil have poor facilities; even their sports courts are far from being ideal, but sports are nevertheless included in Physical Education classes.

It is necessary to “think about the facilities as an ongoing challenge for teachers that envisage Physical Education as a means to expand the references on knowledge” (BRASILEIRO, 2002, p. 9). However, dancing that takes place in unconventional venues, e.g. ballet dancing on hardwood floor, bares and mirrors on the wall, has been identified by different performers/dancers throughout history. Saraiva *et al.* (2005b) report on different venues where dance can be experienced. Sports courts and woods become backdrops where different questions arise about the need for a dedicated “idea” dance venue. This thought might be helpful in planning and organizing dance using venues available in schools.

5 FROM UTILITY TO A LEGITIMATE FORM OF EXPRESSION

Another important study point was to find the possible contributions ensuing from teaching dance as part of the educational process. Two aspects were noted by participating teachers: dance as a tool for the socialization process and as a facilitator for motor development.

Teachers responded that dance “helps socialization, rhythmic development, space-time perception, concentration, physical matters and spontaneous” (Teacher I), and additionally to these skills, “flexibility, agility, resistance and motor coordination” (Teacher J); and it also “improves lower and upper limb motor coordination” (Teacher O).

These ideas represent utilitarian forms frequently attributed to dance and used as justification to defend its inclusion to any program/syllabus. It is still difficult to understand dance as a form of expression, or as another way of experimenting and talking about things that are part of our world. Supported by a technicist education, teachers have perceived more easily physical and motor skills in dance, and its expressive and communicative potential. Perceiving dance as a way of potentializing or getting higher yield in one or more motor skills is a narrow-minded outlook of understanding this subject, as well as Physical Education. Skills and competences should be taken into account, but they cannot be the only objective to propose pedagogical activities, as the teacher would be “and educator with very little of a shaper; much more a trainer, someone who transfers knowledge and exercise skills” (FREIRE, 1996, p. 162).

This condition is actually not enough in the light of a critical and emancipatory Physical Education. This perspective includes the subject in movement or how the subject moves, which is characterized by “relationships of sense/meaning between the human being and the world that are established by movement as an aesthetics experience” (KUNZ, 2006, p. 20). The intrinsic characteristics of dance cannot be denied (flexibility, coordination, space-time orientation, etc.) and should be addressed as means that lead

to expression; however, the main objective should focus on the experience of the body in movement that deals with exercising creation and fosters knowledge. When this knowledge is taken to deeper levels “it also enables a wider awareness of the world and of ourselves” (KUNZ, 2001, p. 51); hence, we understand that the subject in movement has a rapport with his or her world and can be capable of knowing and identifying him/herself as an individual that can interfere in the world.

Dance, as another form of language and as a venue of communication with the world and with other individuals can be identified in the following answers: “dance provides a different means of expressing feelings” (Teacher L), and that dance

helps body expression by offering new possibilities of movements created, copied and imagined on how steps are swapped and in contact with one or more individuals to know different rhythms and to appropriate their ‘own’ dancer (Teacher O).

These ideas are close to the proposal for dance as a school subject, e.g. a different way of speaking about the things that make us, another possibility of revealing ourselves to the world, an experience that leads us to finding the ‘other’ based on multiple forms of moving.

6 DANCE AND THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER: THE REHEARSAL FOR AN APPROXIMATION

The ability of sensitizing and organizing of people who share the experience of dance and the experience of being dancing bodies makes them to turn to their condition of individuals of the world, constituted and constituting their own stories. In this sense dance is:

Like a form of body expression culture, where reclaiming the possibilities of

expression is important to become aware of our situation in the world and to find one's uniqueness (individuality) (SOARES; SARAIVA, 1999, p. 105).

If body culture is “the name given to a broad and wealthy cultural field that encompasses the production of activities that express communication, essentially subjective, externalized by body expression” (ESCOBAR, 1999, p. 91), and dance as a form of expression of body expression – as the result of knowledge produced and accumulated in relation to the body – cannot be neglected as a school subject of Physical Education.

Analyzing the interviews of teachers under this study made it clear that dance is an underexplored subject in Physical Education classes for different reasons. The ones that stand out are the lack of knowledge of dance techniques and the little rapport with this subject. Hence, dance and other Physical Education school subjects need to be tackled with the purpose of overcoming the concept of technique and instruction; it needs to be perceived as a form of experiencing liberating and creative activities that can change students' and (and teachers') attitude in face of a cruel and excluding reality that presents itself to the whole humankind.

According to Kunz (1999, p. 66):

What needs to be urgently considered in order to change the teaching methodology is a veritable psychosocial ‘therapy’ to liberate teachers and students from a teaching methodology focused on technique and instruction de.

It is believed in the force of movements generated by bodies and not by movements imposed to bodies that are limited by the “technical and right” ways of doing things, as it is the teachers' duty to see, listen to and be aware of their students in their whole. When the student creates and expresses a movement, or even a “non-movement”, one must be attentive to it and to its background because it will reveal

the concrete signs of an individual. To this end, dance can be a liberating form of body expression in that it is “the outer venue of imagination that liberates feelings and emotions, as well as pondering on and expressing the changes of the individuals as a whole” (FIAMONCINI; SARAIVA, 1998, p. 96).

Hence, the concern should be to address opportunities that are not offered to students when only a handful of body-related practices are used in Physical Education classes, helping to crystalize false concepts and truths, e.g. that this subject is supported by two or three sports modalities. Physical Education teachers need to know that one of the many objectives of students is “the possibility of knowing and interacting with every type of manifestation of the culture of movement that can be developed in a Physical Education class” (KUNZ, 1999, p. 67).

On the other hand, some teachers showed their lack of interest in obtaining further knowledge of dance for different reasons, i.e. their interest was “focused on sports Physical Education in the school and dance requires a dedicated venue” (Teacher B), and “focused on study and further learning grade level” (Teacher C).

It was noted that for these teachers dance is not considered a school subject of Physical Education. It was also evidenced that Physical Education in school is an activity that focuses almost exclusively on competitive sports, where it is mostly restricted to the more popular sports, e.g. soccer, volleyball, handball, and basketball where there is the right structure in place.

However, it is important to note that it was acknowledged that dance helps in the educational process, even by teachers that affirm they do not teach it and/or are not interested in expanding their knowledge on this subject. According to the praxis approach, data points to a contradiction: even when the teacher is familiar with the content of the subject and that dance is an important

element to develop students, it is not conducive to experiencing it.

As previously noted, studies identify the importance of ongoing education to strengthen dance in schools and reaffirm the need to constantly search for different types of knowledge of dance that enable “greater scope of knowledge related to the methodological handling of dance in schools” based on their own experience (SARAIVA *et al.*, 2007b, p. 125).

There is certainly a long road to be travelled in relation to making dance a permanent part of Physical Education in schools, as teachers still fail to understand and acknowledge the significance of this subject to emancipate individuals. It is believed that dance that should be taught in Physical Education classes is a venue to foster creativity, and first and foremost, sensitivity based on the possibilities of listening, seeing and enjoying whatever or bodies want to communicate and express. Under this perspective, dance is a space-time factor whereby the difficult exercise of tolerance can be experienced, accepting and recognizing the other person as a fundamental part of our own education process.

To this end, dance in Physical Education can be taught based on the background of the movement made by each student; for this reason, under this proposal the teacher does not have to be a dancer, as he or she is responsible for mediating the dialogues and guiding tasks that involve movement. Within this process, the most important “skill” to be “developed” by the Physical Education teacher is sensitivity (and not only in relation to dance); he or she must be sensitive to the communication needs of students; sensitive to their need to be heard, questioned, praised and understood.

It is necessary to go the extra mile if dance is to take its rightful place as a Physical Education subject in school, as it is an experience in moving their own body that encompasses all the implications presented by this phenomenon.

7 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS AND... FIRST STEPS

The issues that guided this study still face much resistance in relation to teaching dance as a school subject. This is justified under different reason, the most frequent of which is the lack of knowledge about this subject. It is important to note that the syllabus of Physical Education graduate courses include other subjects that are taught in a couple of semesters – such as some sports – and yet are school subjects.

Therefore, it could be asked: why does this issue need to be constantly addressed? The answer could be the notorious negligence of dance as a Physical Education school subject, thus reinforcing the idea that it is necessary to expand and deepen these discussions in order to find the road that will lead dance to a permanent place in schools.

The main ideas advocated in this study show dance as an aesthetic experience (SARAIVA; KUNZ, 2003). This understanding expands the possibilities of working with dance and helps to avoid the mistake of teaching it without any pedagogical guidance, calling attention to trends imposed by the media with references of a so-called dance.

Overcoming these notions is part of the learning process that includes self-criticism. In order to develop dance in this manner the Physical Education teacher does not need to be a talented dancer or an expert in dance. He or she must be sensitive to mediate and guide their work, and even they can (and should) experience the discovery and the creation of movement, giving it a meaning and significance that is the expression of their body. Keeping students from the dance experience is creating a gap in their learning process and personal development.

Transitory findings of this study show that it is necessary to boost the role of the teacher-researcher. They must learn how to live and work without the proverbial ‘safety

net’, given that under the current context seeking any form of safe scenario is utopic – what was a certainty yesterday becomes doubt today. In this sense, it is necessary to constantly challenge and overcome hurdles and difficulties that “with creativity and perseverance will become opportunities” (Teacher N).

Possibly, one of the relevant points of this investigation was providing to the interviewees a moment to think about how dance is taught in schools. We would like to believe that this study was able to raise the awareness of teachers to question themselves and maybe remind them that this subject can improve students’ body-related experiences, enabling new communication venues with other individuals and the world. Ultimately, it is hoped that this subject will become strong and will win over bodies in the school”. (“...in the school system” – should this be?)

Educação Física escolar e dança: percepções de professores no ensino fundamental

Resumo: Este artigo apresenta dados e discussões de uma pesquisa que objetivou compreender a percepção de professores de educação física no ensino fundamental, em relação ao conteúdo dança nas suas aulas. Os dados coletados apontam, especialmente, para questões relacionadas à formação inicial e suas implicações no trato com esse conteúdo na escola. Destacou-se a negligência com o ensino da dança entre os conteúdos da educação física, o que reforça a necessidade de se ampliar e aprofundar as discussões que indiquem um caminho para que a dança realmente se efetive no âmbito escolar.

Palavras-chave: Dança. Educação Física. Ensino fundamental.

Educación Física Escolar y Danza: percepciones de profesores en la enseñanza primaria

Resumen: Este artículo presenta datos y discusiones de una investigación cuyo objetivo fue comprender la percepción de profesores de educación física en la enseñanza primaria, en relación al contenido danza en las clases de educación física. Los datos recabados apuntan, especialmente, para cuestiones relacionadas a la formación inicial y sus implicaciones en el trato con ese contenido en la escuela. Se

destacó La negligencia con la enseñanza de la danza entre los contenidos de la educación física, lo que refuerza La necesidad de ampliar y profundizar las discusiones a fin de visualizar un camino para que la enseñanza de la danza realmente sea efectiva en el ámbito escolar.

Palabras claves: Baile. Educación Física. Educación primaria.

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