

EVALUATION OF SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION: RECOGNIZING IT AS A SPECIFIC CURRICULUM COMPONENT

*AValiação na Educação Física Escolar: Reconhecendo a
Especificidade de um Componente Curricular*

*Evaluación en la Educación Física Escolar: Reconociendo la
Especificidad de un Componente Curricular*

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Keywords

Education, primary
and secondary.
Educational
measurement.
Narration.

Abstract: The study aims to analyze the possibilities and the needs to produce evaluation practices in physical education that take into account the knowledge valued by school education and the specificities of that discipline. It uses autobiographical narrative research as a theoretical and methodological framework. Subjects are students of the 1st-4th grade elementary school in a municipal school in Serra, Espírito Santo, Brazil. Its sources include drawings, written pedagogical activities and physical education diaries. These evaluation instruments enabled students to narrate their body experiences by transforming mastery knowledge and relational knowledge into object-knowledge.

Palavras-chave

Ensino fundamental
e médio.
Avaliação
educacional.
Narração.

Resumo: O estudo busca analisar as possibilidades e as necessidades de se produzir práticas avaliativas na Educação Física que levem em consideração os saberes valorizados pela educação escolarizada e pelas especificidades dessa disciplina. Utiliza a pesquisa narrativa autobiográfica como referencial teórico-metodológico e define, como colaboradores, alunos do primeiro ao quarto ano do ensino fundamental de uma escola municipal da Prefeitura de Serra/Espírito Santo. Possui como fontes desenhos, atividades pedagógicas escritas e diários de Educação Física. Esses instrumentos avaliativos possibilitaram aos discentes narrar as suas experiências corporais mediante a transformação dos saberes de domínio e relacionais em saberes-objeto

Palabras clave

Educación primaria y
secundaria.
Evaluación
educacional.
Narración.

Resumen: El estudio busca analizar las posibilidades y las necesidades de producir prácticas evaluativas en la Educación Física que lleven en consideración los saberes valorados por la educación escolarizada y por las especificidades de esa asignatura. Utiliza la investigación narrativa autobiográfica como referencia teórico-metodológica y define, como colaboradores, alumnos del primer al cuarto año de la enseñanza fundamental de una escuela municipal del Ayuntamiento de Serra/Espírito Santo. Posee como fuentes: dibujos, actividades pedagógicas escritas y diarios de Educación Física. Esos instrumentos evaluativos posibilitaron que los discentes narrasen sus experiencias corporales, mediante la transformación de los saberes de dominio y relacionales en saberes-objeto.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Under several approaches, production of knowledge in the field of Education evaluation has been the subject of intense debate in Brazil since the 1930s. In recent years, the debate on this issue has intensified and produced movements of different orders and potentials. However, analyses of evaluation practices in Physical Education only gained strength in the mid-1970s, in order to create reliable and objective evaluation methods, influenced by works in the field of education, especially those by Bloom, Pophan, Scriven, Stake, Stufflebeam and Tyler.

Gradually, construction of knowledge in the area and the intense dialogue with references, mainly from the field of Education, indicated other theoretical possibilities based on ethics, differences and learning processes, especially from the perspectives of assessment-based (CECHELLA, 1991) and formative (LUIS, 2010) evaluation, and as an index practice (SANTOS, 2005, 2008). These views have helped us understand that there is no evaluative practice de-contextualized from pedagogical perspectives that offer them the basis, since its conception is not determined by the instrument, but rather by the evaluator's intent. Having said that, how has Physical Education been dealing with evaluation in school routine?

Studies such as Hébrard (1990) have shown how cultural practices are systematized in school through different symbolic systems and materialized in training devices that emphasize reading and writing as learning that precede all disciplines. In this case, it is precisely that learning focused on reading and writing knowledges that, translated into testing and school projects, turns into evaluation processes. Santos and Maximiano (2013) and Santos (2005, 2008) have discussed the challenges for Physical Education to adjust to the evaluation logic present in the school universe while announcing, in dialogue with teachers, other perspectives based on how individuals take ownership of and produce meanings for their experiences with the practices.

In this context, this article discusses the possibilities for and needs to produce evaluation practices that take into account knowledges valued by school education and the specifics of Physical Education as a curricular component. We intend to point out paths, alternatives and possibilities to think of an evaluation process focused on the meanings produced by subjects in the relationship they establish with knowledge (CHARLOT, 2000).

Firstly, we outline the theoretical and methodological perspective that guides this research. Then we analyze the sources, in dialogue with the academic production. Finally, we resume the main issues addressed.

2 THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

Our theoretical and methodological approach to research is based on autobiographical narrative. Just as "[...] the art of evoking, to narrate is to ascribe meanings to experiences" (SOUZA, 2006). By externalizing knowledge about oneself and the several dimensions of educational knowledge and practices, it allows us to build a process of reflection and interpretation of stories of life and appropriation of knowledges. Self-narrating can help discovering, gaining awareness and (re)signifying oneself. By looking into first-graders' narratives, we seek to examine the experiences they recalled and shared in the evaluation instruments produced in Physical Education classes.¹

¹ The study was approved by the UFES Ethics Committee under number 15419913.4.0000.5542. Students signed a Free and Informed Consent form; their guardians signed a Consent form authorizing the research and the disclosure of images.

This research is intended to show students' contribution as their memories and their ruins (BENJAMIN, 1994) revisited in the present, which are narrated in an action of reminiscence understood as "[...] a chain of events embodied by the narrator; it weaves a network of common stories" (BENJAMIN, 1994, p. 205). The narrator, based on a mimetic activity (BENJAMIN, 1994), selects experiences to recall and record, thus producing a new reading of the events that have marked him or her.

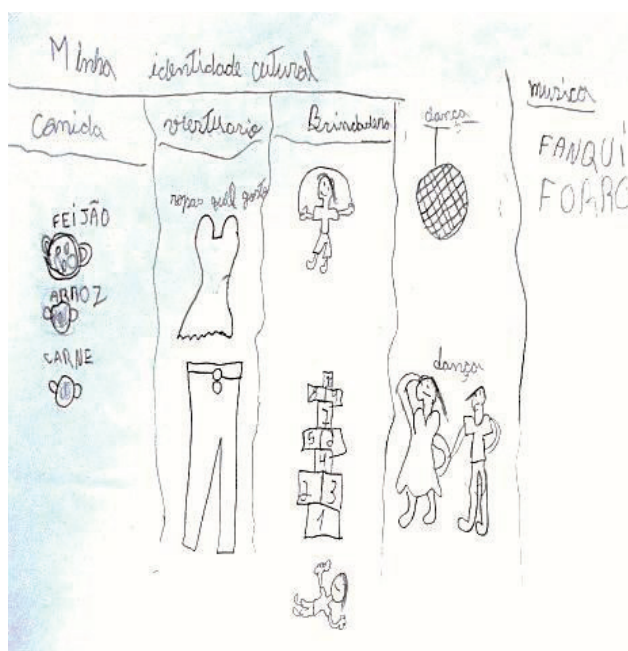
Our research collaborators were 1st-4th graders from a public school in the town of Serra, ES. The school was chosen from a previous study (SANTOS; MAXIMIANO, 2013), in which we identified the use of the Physical Education diary as a teacher evaluation practice. Classes were suggested by the teacher herself, since, based on students' mastery of written language, different evaluation tools were produced.

Our sources were all image materials (ALVES, 2007) produced by students, expressed in drawings, written educational activities, and Physical Education diaries. The teacher used drawings with 1st-year- students since they could not write, in a total of 16 pieces. Second-year students developed 20 written educational activities and 21 drawings, while third-year students produced 36 diaries, 20 of which were accompanied by drawings. In the 4th year, in turn, diaries were written by 23 students. These materials were not analyzed as data, but as products (CERTEAU, 1994) – a result of cultural action experienced by students in the places and spaces of the school institution.

3 FROM THE CONCEPTION OF EVALUATION TO THE POSSIBILITY OF USING ICONOGRAPHIC RECORDS AS TOOLS

The Physical Education teacher focused her teaching practice on the development of projects coordinated with teachers from different curricular components such as "Cultural Identity". In order to know the identities of the families that were part of that school community, she asked 2nd-year students to do research on games, clothes and food related to their ancestors' childhoods, as shown in Figure 1:

Figure 1 – Drawing: "My cultural identity"



Source: Authors' data

Students' drawings showed the experiences of their parents, including jump-rope, hopscotch and cooking, and used writing to express their preferences. According to Ramos, Panozzo and Zanolla (2011) and Lopes (2008), verbal and visual languages are representations of social and collective reality – reference points for cultural expressions with their specific discourses. Through the drawings, students not only portrayed the elements present in their daily lives, but also showed readings that operate on the culture in which they live, self-projecting on their records. By building themselves a culture, the student writes and draws the kind of clothes she likes most and indicates possibilities for teaching dance, by writing the names of musical styles she identifies with, such as funk and *forró*.

The use of drawing to understand how students construct and reconstruct their identities based on characteristics of their community reveals the teacher's intention to find out whether or not the children knew local practices, in order to value their culture. The absence of *congo* – typical of the region where the school is located – indicated the need to discuss the concepts of identity, culture and cultural identity with students.

The teacher's practices signal the use of images as an assessment-type evaluative tool.² Conducted early in the process, assessment aimed at producing elements for the teacher to guide and define her pedagogical work. Recognition of students' knowledge was crucial to the work. It was based on what students know, do not know, or still do not know to define their learning processes.

Therefore, evaluation demands a political attitude toward analyzing reality, questioning and self-questioning. As a research practice, through the clues and indications produced by school practitioners,³ it allows showing teaching-learning processes that had been constructed, under construction and still not constructed, thus providing elements for other paths and tracks (SANTOS, 2005 2008).

The teacher also worked with drawings during the quarter in order to capture what 1st-year students learned in Physical Education classes. Some of the 16 drawings mapped are associated with writing, as seen in Figures 2 and 3:

Figure 2 – Luana's drawing



Figure 3 – Ana Luiza's drawing



Source: Authors' data

² The conceptual field of evaluation has three evaluative types, defined according to their timing and aim. Early in the process, assessment-type evaluation aims at predicting, guiding and projecting; during the process, formative evaluation seeks to adapt and adjust; at the end of a predetermined time, summative evaluation aims at classifying and selecting. In the scenario of academic production, assessment and formative types turned into perspective, as can be seen in Luckesi (2000) and Hadji (1994) respectively.

³ Concept used by Certeau (1994) to decipher everyday subjects' *tactical* actions. Practitioners develop actions, produce alternative forms of use, thus becoming producers, disseminating alternatives, manipulating products and rules in their own ways.

Images and writing project what was experienced in class, such as jumping rope, volleyball, shuttlecock and gymnastics, but learning has a different meaning for each person when it comes to incorporated knowledge. In both figures, children's aesthetic references are underscored in the use of different colors and shapes – elements that attract and stimulate them in their first contact with reading (RAMOS; PANOZZO; ZANOLLA, 2011). While drawings are not secondary in reading the text, since they broaden the understanding of textual language, the resources used also suggest children's intentions to narrate their own learning experiences regarded as significant through the images.

In Figure 2, a child holds a doll in her lap, reminding us of rag dolls made in Physical Education classes. The child's clothes and hair indicate that the child in the drawing is the student herself. By drawing herself playing with dolls, the child may enter an imaginary universe and take ownership of an adult culture, while strengthening her status as a generational category that has playing as one of its main languages. According to Borba (2007), when children play, they become subjects of social experience, independently organizing their actions and interactions, developing plans and forms of joint actions, creating rules of social coexistence and participation in games. They not only reproduce an adult culture, but in the consumption relation they established with that culture, they invent other forms of learning.

Figure 3 shows Physical Education as a discipline that provides an opportunity for students to learn content in other school spaces, such as outdoors environments that are mostly associated with the sports court, the schoolyard or – specifically for the school studied in this work – the terrace. In five of the sixteen drawings produced, we find landscapes like the sun, clouds, trees and flowers. According to Diógenes (2004), the images of the spaces represented often express individual and collective experiences produced by the relationship established with a particular environment and the complicities that narrate a group's unique meaning. The dialogue with the author leads us to understand that, when specifying the space in which they learn Physical Education knowledges, children recall the identities produced by/for that group of students through the relationship they establish with the terrace.

In all images, we find students experiencing activities. To attend Physical Education classes, according to their conceptions, is to try and master a body practice with or without different objects such as ropes, balls and toys. In this case, having the object is not enough; it is necessary to master it and thus produce one's own body experience. From that debate, we infer that children learn not only by reading, writing and speaking; they also learn when they express themselves with their bodies, since movement cannot be considered only natural, spontaneous, organic; it is mainly related to cultural, emotional and social issues (SCHNEIDER; BUENO, 2005).

The instruments used by the teacher show the perspective underlying her pedagogical and evaluation practices. The analyses of the records, which portrait evaluation as a space for recording and interpreting meanings, are based on the constant exercise of reading signs and indications that result in value judgments and decision-making (SANTOS,

2008). However, how is it possible to understand students' narratives about the meanings ascribed to what was taught about their body experiences while taking into account the knowledge that confers specificity to Physical Education? How can we take signs and indications recorded in the evaluation instruments as references so as to enhance student learning?

To understand the knowledge meant by that discipline in school everyday life and the need to change the understanding about what evaluating would mean in School Physical Education, we resorted to Charlot's (2000) theories about knowledge and the figures of learning. The author states that learning might be appropriating knowledge that one does not have and whose existence is inscribed in books, monuments or works of art, called object-knowledge; it can also be a form of mastering an activity or the use of an object in a relevant way, where one goes from non-mastery to mastery. It is knowledge as appropriation of the world, of a set of past meanings, the body, and it is called mastery knowledge. Learning is also an epistemic relationship of mastery – not of an activity, but of a relationship. Learning means becoming able to regulate the relationship with oneself and others, and finding a convenient distance between oneself and others, called relational knowledge.

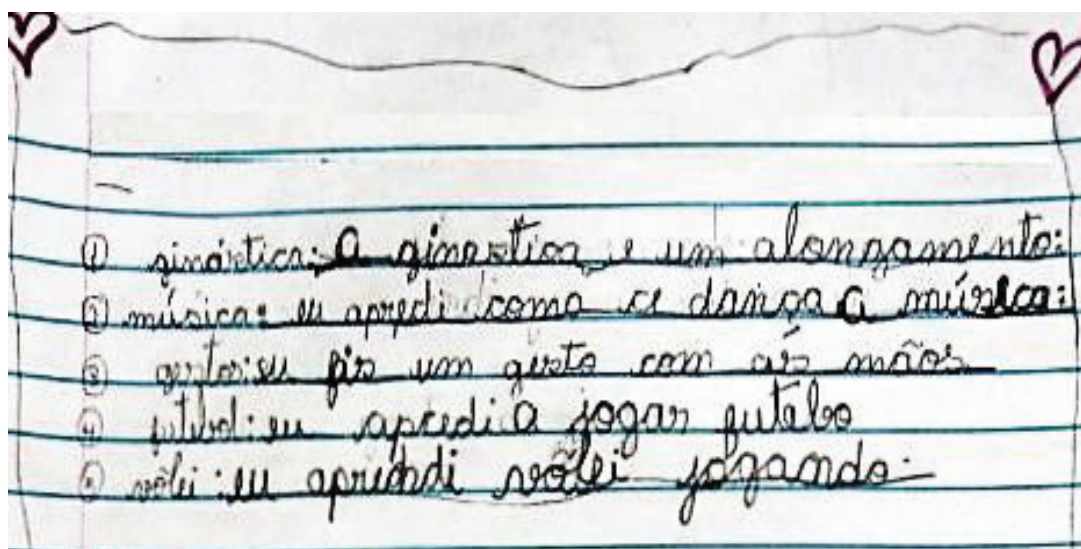
School, as the place of the word and of other forms of symbolizing the world, of systematized knowledges whose mode of existence is verbal language, tends to value disciplines that emphasize knowledge related to objectification-denomination (SANTOS; MAXIMIANO, 2013). Physical Education, in turn, takes on an epistemic status that has another relationship with knowledge when compared with other curriculum components. By focusing on the mastery dimension of knowledge, which centers on *doing with* (SCHNEIDER; BUENO, 2005), it re-dimensions the school form.

But while this discipline (re) signifies the school universe, it has to adjust to it, that is, while Physical Education operates under the logic and procedures that provide the foundation to the school form, e. g. grades, it also subverts it since it establishes the relationship of the “[...] body-subject with the world, a world shared with others, an embodied way to own oneself and one's environment” (CHARLOT, 2009, p. 244). At this point, we agree with Charlot (2009, p. 243), when he points out:

[...] Physical Education is not a school subject “like the others” [...]. It is not like the others because it deals with a way of learning that is different from appropriation of statement-knowledges. Instead of trying to cancel or hide this difference, we should underscore it and clarify it. The fact that it is a different discipline does not mean it is less legitimate than others.

Giving visibility to subjectivities incarnated in each practitioner's experience leads us to think of an evaluation perspective based on the epistemological status of Physical Education and, at the same time, it presents us with possibilities for recording that show how students relate to knowledge. As we will see in Figure 4, the activity “Assembling sentences” is an alternative for understanding how students express their learning through writing:

Figure 4 - Activity "Assembling sentences"



Key:

- 1) gymnastics: Gymnastics stretch
- 2) music: I learned how to dance music
- 3) gestures: I did a gesture with my hands
- 4) football: I learned to play football
- 5) volleyball: I learned volleyball playing

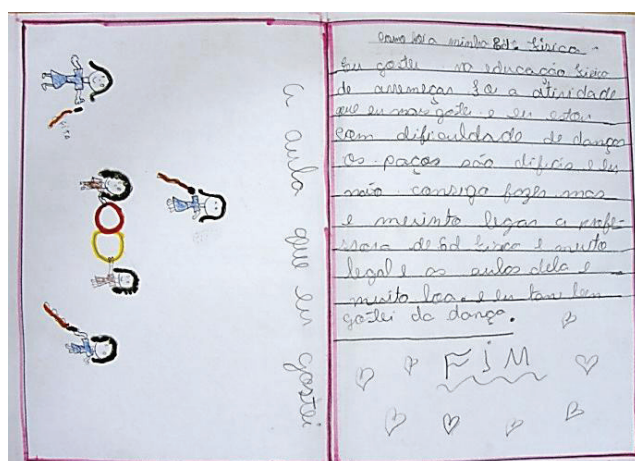
Source: Authors' data

Produced by 2nd-year students, the activity aimed at understanding what they had learned by the end of 2011. Therefore, the teacher indicated some key words so they would build individually sentences related to their learning. In all the suggested themes, children write about how they incorporated knowledges in Physical Education classes: through body experimentation. However, specifically with gymnastics, they demonstrate that they appropriated the content not only through bodily mastery, but also that, by assigning it a piece of knowledge – stretching – they point out that their learning also involves the transformation of the activity into cognitive mastery, object-knowledge, thus revealing the understanding of knowledge and its use in a given context.

Having been held at the end of the year, this activity could be, from the teacher's point of view, a summative evaluation in which the final product is favored: the result of students' learning. To Luckesi (2011), understanding evaluation as a quantification of learning would mean classifying, temporarily or permanently excluding students who are not successful in their final performance. This form of evaluating is related to classification processes where tests, grades, passing or failing (ESTEBAN, 2003) are central axes for an evaluation practice that, in the case of Physical Education, would respond to and meet school logic.

However, the teacher was not concerned with assigning a grade, but understanding how students ascribed meanings to their experiences, that is, the relationship they established with knowledge and the meanings produced in that relationship. Having this in mind, she implemented the Physical Education diary as an evaluation tool. Each student has his or her diary that is a device for recording knowledge learned, as can be seen in Figure 5.

Figure 5 – Lorena's diary about what she would to learn



Source: Authors' data

Translation:

"How was my Physical Education?"

I liked in Physical Education to throu. It was the activity I liket most and dancing is difiult for me. Steps are difficult and I cant do them. But its reely cool and the Physical Education teacher is cool and her clases and very good. and I also liket the dance. THE END"

The production of the narrative in Figure 5 was based on two questions: "What did I enjoy learning in Physical Education classes? What would I like to learn?" Conducted in all quarters, this type of record allowed the teacher to monitor students' learning as they narrate events, turning them into experiences.

Children express satisfaction with Physical Education classes, not only for what they learned, but especially because of the epistemic relation to knowledge and approximation with teachers. Lorena (Figure 5) highlights her difficulties in mastering the dance content with her body, formulating analyses and synthesis of the process she lived. However, as a result of the close relationship with her teacher, that practice that used to be difficult to understand is now – at the end of her narrative – one with which she also identifies. Possibly, the preference for dance was not caused by a correct development of choreographic steps, but by her admiration for her teacher. Relations with knowledge in mastery or not an activity and in interpersonal relationships, in this case, imply that the teacher will need mediation that broadens and motivates the process of appropriation of the dance content as well as the establishment of criteria to include it and systematize it in schooling.

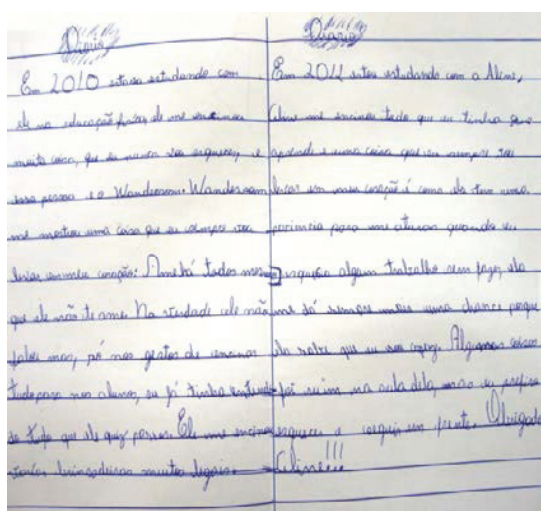
In the diary produced, the different languages used signal to the reader that word and illustration interact in understanding the narratives. Although the visual representation of the class which she liked best is different from that expressed in the text, according to Bruzzo (2004), it is necessary to think about the relationship between image and writing beyond the status given to these media, especially when a secondary role is assigned to drawing, where it assumes the need to "[...] be accompanied by a text that will give it meaning" (BRUZZO, 2004, p. 1361). For the author, illustrations can express knowledge that is not always possible to translate in writing.

A description of the drawing will show the thorough manner in which it was produced. The child shows elements that confer specificity to a sport, in this case, rhythmic gymnastics. She reproduces a choreographic formation, specifies some of its devices and demonstrates understanding of its rules by drawing only girls handling hoops and ribbons, as well as by characterizing them by similar colors in their tights, in the two small groups designed. According to Bruzzo (2004), the child might have narrated in detail, by means of illustration, content that was also in her interest. However, given its gestural complexity, it is not easy to describe it because of the precedence it takes over written language in schooling. Another possible analysis is that

the child understands rhythmic gymnastics because of the musicality involved in its movements, just as in dance.

The diary was also used with the 3rd-grade class at the end of the process, in order to identify body practices experienced in Physical Education in the previous year and in the year it was produced, as is the case shown in Figure 6. The teacher also aimed to use the analyses of the diaries to design new actions.

Figure 6 – Leyslane' diary



Translation: "In 2010 I was studying with him in Physical Education, he taught me a lot of things that I will never forget, and that person is Wanderson. Wanderson showed me something that I will always carry in my heart. Love everyone even if he does not love you. In fact he did not tell me that, but only in his gestures of teaching everything to students, I understood everything he wanted to transmit. He taught me many very cool games. In 2011 I'm studying with Aline, Aline taught me all I had to learn and something that I will always carry in my heart is that she has a patience to put up with me when I forget some work without doing, she will always give me a second chance because she knows what I'm capable of. Some things were bad in her class, but I'd rather forget them and move on. Thank you Aline!"

Source: Authors' data

By and large, diaries invite the reader to understand what happened in class, the content taught, as well as the meanings produced by students in the relationships established with Physical Education and with the subjects who participate in it. It should be noted that children address their narrative toward teachers, both recognizing the learning they provoked and the way they act with the class.

Lorena's and Leylane's diaries stress relational knowledge, which takes place in the dialogue with the teacher. Their focus is on how teachers mark students' educational history when they promote their personal and social appreciation. The fact that teachers believe that a student is capable and worthy of new opportunities, as highlighted by Leylane, brings students closer to a positive reading of reality and therefore, to evaluation itself.

In the words of Charlot (2000), a positive reading means paying attention to what students do, what they know of life, what they are, and not only to their failures. For the author, positive reading is above all an epistemological and methodological stance. According to him, practicing positive reading means neither only not fundamentally understanding the knowledge gained as well as lacking; it means reading what is read as negative in a different way. The author states that,

Thus, for a student who fails to learn, a negative reading speaks of deficiencies, lacking, gaps; it brings into play the reification and annihilation processes we examined, while a positive reading wonders 'what is happening', which activity is implemented by students, which is the meaning of the situation for them, what kind of relations they establish with others, etc. A positive reading seeks to understand how the situation of the student who fails is built into learning, rather than 'what is missing' for that situation to be that of a successful student (CHARLOT, 2000, p. 30).

A positive reading shows us another evaluation perspective in which not knowing is a learning opportunity. The task of the evaluator is therefore a permanent exercise of signal interpretation as a process of reflection on and for action. It should contribute for teachers and students to be able to perceive indications, to reach levels of complexity in interpretation of their meanings and to incorporate them as important events for teaching and learning dynamics (SANTOS, 2008). By taking the process of learning/development prospectively and emphasizing the collective, shared nature of the process of knowledge building, Esteban (1998) strengthens the need to investigate the knowing/not knowing relationship established in school practices, enabling new views about the pedagogical dynamic of evaluation.

The author seeks to replace the univocal exclusionary interpretation that proposes evaluation as a process articulated as the distinction between right and wrong with a dialogic orientation that implies inclusion and multiplicity. The challenge is to break up right/wrong, knowing/not knowing dichotomies and imprint another spelling in the process of knowledge building by envisaging those dichotomies as complementary and complex. When working with the dimension of error as a process that is revealed in students' not-yet-knowing or as a dimension of potential rather than deficiency, Hoffmann (2001) re-situates his notion, understanding error as an important element in the perception of the diversity of logics and knowledges that circulate in the school context and are shaped in the responses given by those involved in the process.

Providing visibility to ambiguity, it incorporates it as a sign that conclusions should be relativized and continuously challenged. It is necessary to understand the logic of the other, for difference signals new possibilities (ESTEBAN, 2002a). In this sense, Esteban (2002b), by presenting the classroom as a plural space, emphasizes the need to create conditions for interpretation of the multiple experiences that subjects bring to everyday life, thus favoring appropriation of interpretations and knowledges that are necessary. The teacher must appropriate the student's understanding – the evaluation process's axis – because a response that is different from that expected does not mean lack of knowledge; it can be a creative solution using the student's tools and knowledges.

4 FINAL REMARKS

This research aimed to discuss the need for change in the understanding on the evaluation of the teaching-learning process, considering the school's logic and specificity of Physical Education as a curricular component. Through records produced by 1st-to-3rd-year students of elementary school, we resorted to theory of knowledge, in figures of learning (CHARLOT, 2000), in the perspective of evaluation as an indexical practice (SANTOS, 2005, 2008), and as investigation (ESTEBAN, 2002c) to analyze the meanings ascribed to what is experienced in class and their implications for teachers' evaluation practices.

The narratives reveal the nature of knowledges favored by Physical Education – those incorporated by mastery and relational knowledges. By *doing with* (SCHNEIDER; BUENO, 2005) in learning of bodily practices, children embody the experiences lived in class and produce, in their relation to the world, self and other, a dialogue with the remaining figures of learning. However, the fact that they give priority to the dimension of *doing with* does not exclude the possibility of materializing the knowledge incorporated by mastering an activity and produced by the relational dimension in reading devices such as the activity "Assembling sentences" and

the Physical Education diary, although that is not their specificity or goal. Therefore, we start from the practices incarnated in the body to produce recording tools that are configured as object-knowledges, thus enabling other types of appropriation.

The teacher's evaluation practices signaled written language as a potential means for students to express the particular ways in which they get involved in the learning process, how they perceive themselves and see others, thus better translating – especially in the diary – the way they produce knowledges in the relationship with themselves and other subjects. In turn, image records provided an understanding of how content is mastered bodily, becoming tools that enable children not only to systematize an explanation of what they learned in the form of statements, but also to express their experience through visuals.

Although we discussed the use of drawing and diaries as evaluation tools, research is needed to articulate the content of those tools with oral narratives about their use in Physical Education classes, in order to understand students' readings on instruments produced by them during schooling.

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