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**Autonomy and Physical Education
Teacher Identity on the Curriculum of
the State of São Paulo**

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Autonomy and Physical Education Teacher Identity on the Curriculum of the State of São Paulo

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Abstract

This study analyzed the mechanisms that physical education teachers use to integrate their knowledge and act autonomously on the Curriculum for State Physics Education of São Paulo, from observing the impact of the Curriculum of the State of São Paulo, on the school routine and the difficulties faced by teachers on learning situations elucidated in the Curriculum. The autonomy that teachers demonstrate in front of the Curriculum depends on the one hand, on their personal background and professional training and on the other hand, on the objective conditions of pedagogical practice. Teachers joined the paper as a result of the appreciation of Physical Education by the different subjects of the school community, after its implementation. The pedagogical practices of teachers to some extent, changed the Curriculum, because they also consider it necessary to propose new principles for their work, but continued marked by other conceptions of Physical Education and the school everyday reality, influencing and impacting teaching practice. Data for this study were obtained from the master thesis and analyzed under the supervision of Jose Contreras and Paulo Freire.

Keywords: Curriculum, Identity of physical education teachers, Professional autonomy.

Introduction

The Curriculum and Brazilian educational reforms are marked from the 90s by the historical context of Brazil and the world, as aspects of globalization and global modernization, democratization of Brazil and the preparation of official documents as the last Brazilian Constitution (1988) the LDBEN¹ (Law No. 9394/96) and the World Conference (1990) on Education, highlight the context of changes taking place in Brazil, emphasizing education as an important aspect in this context. "... Basic education as a priority for this decade ..." (Tomasi et al. 1996: 129).

In view of the ideals of education in the documents and reforms from the 90s, the National Curriculum Parameters (MoES 1997), for example, have assumptions of this globalized worldview, a worried Brazil with education of the population, and seeking by means of a national standard, the unification of content and goals of basic education, as already pointed by Article 210 of the Brazilian Constitution, "there will be set minimum content for elementary schools in order to ensure a common basic education and respect the cultural and artistic, national and regional values" (Brazilian Constitution 1988).

In Physical Education, the National Curriculum Guidelines, concepts are presented that direct the intentions of future education designed to meet the educational demands in basic education.

The Physical Education document contains a proposal that seeks to democratize, humanize and diversify the pedagogical practice in the area, seeking to expand, just a biological view, for a job that incorporates the affective, cognitive and socio-cultural dimensions of the students ... (MoES, 1997: 15).

In line with these documents and laws that supported the Brazilian education, the government of the State of São Paulo implemented from 2008, a Curriculum proposal that in 2010 became the official curriculum, Curriculum of the State of São Paulo (CSP), with theoretical foundations - methodological guiding and underpinning the work of teachers and students in public schools.

Regarding the curriculum of the State of São Paulo (CSP), it has been six years since its implementation in 2008, we can consider that teachers had a period of time to take ownership of the concepts and objectives underlying the reference materials (notebooks) for the design and performance of professional practice. Corroborating the principle a mastery of the elements, concepts and constituent goals of the curriculum and joining or adding them to their teaching.

The CSP has objectives and targets, in which:

The Secretariat of São Paulo State Education refers to the proposal with a handout that includes the Fundamental II school and secondary, in order to contribute to the schools through two initiatives aimed at ... improving the quality of learning of their students (Freitas 2014: 8).

And the paper also emphasizes actions that were performed and ideas for a contemporary education: "The first initiative relates to the collection of materials and

¹Ministry of Education. Law of Directives and Basis of National Education 9394/96. Retrieved from <http://goo.gl/hvB4b>. [Accessed: 22 June 2015]

knowledge produced in education and the second to identify the schools and teachers consult on the best practices" (SEE 2008: 8).

Highlighting that, the aim of preparing a paper that has a common knowledge base for public schools.

These assumptions presented in the paper, generally emphasize the principles of education that aims to perceive the requirements of nowadays society and the low status of Brazilian education at the global level.

In general, CSP in the Physical Education area offers the opportunity to reconsider the area, however, not to disregard its tradition and accumulated knowledge, but to expand its pedagogical and didactic tract. In contrast to traditional teaching of Education Physics, technicalities based on only the biological sciences assumptions, we seek to provide a novel design of critical intentions (Freitas 2014).

In order to explain the design of CSP Physical Education, it is necessary to understand the role of this curriculum implemented in state schools in São Paulo, with a view to understanding and the use of this material.

The Curriculum of Physical Education of the State of São Paulo

The Curriculum has developed goals and concepts of education and physical education, dividing them into some steps that underlie the intentions and meanings given to physical education discipline.

These foundations have some aspects such as: the aims of education in the contemporary world and the principles of Curriculum presentation of the areas of knowledge and the proposed (Curriculum) Specific Physical Education, organized in: concepts, perspectives, justifications, and dealing with contents.

According to Freitas (2014), the Curriculum aims to support schools, to indicate principles, integrate the official Curriculum materials used by the school, the Curriculum manage dynamically and collectively, provide the material to managers and teachers as mentors of pedagogical practice.

In the paper the authors present a cultural perspective of the area, such as SEE (2008), where the relevance of that aspect by considering the differences of the students facing different realities and contexts, is justified.

Therefore, the authors emphasize the importance of expanding the possibilities of thinking about the schools' physical education, not refuting its tradition, but reflecting on its acting and didactic-pedagogic representation.

Some concepts, such as the movement of culture and the Self-move, the manifestations of physical education, such as dance, sports and play, for example, are contemplated from these concepts and served with other themes.

Definition of Movement Culture

[...] Movement culture is defined as the set of meanings/senses, symbols and codes that are produced and dynamically reproduced in games, sports, dances and rhythmic activities, wrestling, gymnastics etc. which influence delimit, streamline and / or constrain moving subjects, base of our meaningful dialogue with the world and with others (SEE 2008: 43).

Definition of Self-Move

[...] You can set the "Self-move" as individual and/or group expression within a movement culture; It is the relationship that the subject establishes with its culture from its repertoire (information/knowledge, movements, behaviors etc.), its history of life in their social and cultural bonds and their desires (SEE 2008: 43).

Professor Notebook

- guideline on the content of documents;
- context, concepts and facts about the proposed theme;
- strategies called learning situations;
- the purpose of the description as well as the skills and abilities to be developed;
- evaluation activities;
- recovery activities;
- references articles, websites and films on the topics covered.

The Contents

In dealing with the content, the authors underscore the social relevance of the content, the age characteristics, the community in which the school operates, (SEE 2008), as well as the various skills and abilities to be developed.

It is important to note that the authors refer to the Curriculum as collateral to support the work of teachers. As the following quotes, (SEE 2008: 8)

- "(...) This notebook is designed to provide support to their work ..."
- "(...) It is intended that the Learning Situations suggested here for the themes ..."
- "(...) The proposed procedures as suggestions (...)"

The Student Notebook

This material has the content and themes to be included in each series every two months, as the contract teachers, including: the presentation and the history of the contents, exercises, images and work to be performed individually or in groups. The themes should be related to the axes of content, with different goals and strategies.

The documents and materials presented are for renewing physical education from the point of view of its historical process and references to the various approaches that contemplated it, referring them from traditional to renewing, or critical-social.

The Professional Autonomy of Teachers of Physical Education Curriculum in Relation to the State of São Paulo

For the analysis may be made, the concept of autonomy that based it was based on, should be noted.

The Professional Autonomy

To Contreras (2002) autonomy is linked to "being a teacher", which the author calls professionalism, and the autonomy, one aspect of professionalism, inherent

values and commitments of teaching practice and the construction of their professional identity.

From these aspects, professionalism and identity, the teacher is responsible for the construction of autonomy and should claim it as a right in their pedagogical practice, however, being aware of their role in building autonomy and could, according to Contreras (2002), reflect some fundamentals of their practice.

The author also refers to the moral commitment that the teacher should have with the school community, as an important factor of professional autonomy, the relationship he/she has with this community should be based on a "reflective conversation" with the situations faced in their teaching practice, in order to establish actions. However this reflective conversation, should not be generated in isolation but with their peers, collectively based on collaboration and understanding and not in imposing (Contreras 2002), ie through a dialogic relationship. Although Freire (1996: 136) says about dialogue: "The subject that opens to the world and others open with their gesture dialogical relationship ..." to emphasize the importance of dialogue.

In this sense Freire (2005: 91), refers to dialogue as a right of man, "say the word" in relation "I-You", as the author mentions, aims to establish a relationship of mediation between men in dialogue and the world, in order to transform it. Dialogue for Freire is the "world conquest for liberation of men."

Autonomy as a Critical Distance

Given that the autonomous teacher is a critical teacher, this is a problematical way, considering the conditions, limitations and social demands involving their teaching practice.

It is important in this review, to consider, the institutions, the school community, the reality in which the school is located, the characteristics of the students, the Curriculum, values, so that their decisions can be guided in a practice that emancipate the teachers and their students and is not a practice that plays, but as Contreras (2002) mentions develops in society and democratic values education, participation and equality.

Autonomy as Awareness of Bias and of Itself

Autonomy as the awareness of bias, reflects the ability to analyze critically, not only from personal and uncompromising values for decision making, but also considering the diversity of values, cultures, ideas and experiences, because of this these factors should be included in the planning during the teaching practice. "There would be a few examples that could be cited plans, policy nature or simply teaching, which failed because its makers left a personal vision of reality" (Freire 2005: 97).

For Freire (2005: 93), "Self-sufficiency is incompatible with dialogue. Men who have no humility or lose, cannot approach the people."

This is related to the sensitivity of understanding the other from the other, not only to himself, allowing the "reflective conversation" to be dynamic and not to have a fixed form, and gives new meaning to values and practices from the critical reflection part of their practice and knowledge of one's self.

In this context, the teacher should exercise his professionalism with freedom, freedom that allows him to create, share, choose and decide from the dialogues critical analysis and reflective talks, therefore paving the way for him to teach with autonomy.

To Contreras (2002), the loss of teacher autonomy is rather linked to the automation and routinization of teaching, fulfilling only decisions that are external and that control and disqualify their work, in which the teacher can or cannot carry out the

construction of their autonomy from the time when it is disconnected from choices, plans and decisions involving their practice, so the autonomy, according to the author, an educational requirement is based on elements that constitute an emancipated education. Education based on the dialogic aspect of educational activity unfolds in "power" to create and transform their professionalism, their relationships and so their teaching (Freire 2005: 94).

In this sense Freire (1996), also explains that there is only autonomy if there is conviction that change is possible. As an example, there can be changes even before the routinization of work conditions that at first diminish the autonomy of the teacher. This change of the author should be based and initiated by dialogue, through which it is possible to understand the reality, challenges us to think about it and reveals the need to overcome obstacles. (Freire 1996).

Teachers' stress factors, common and individual, are a result of the difficulties encountered in the teaching practice everyday as the functional and professional situation in which they find themselves. Regarding the common aspects, teachers revealed that there is scarcity of resources, spaces and school maintenance in the area of Physical Education, plus that there is heavy workload and difficult relationships with some students.

Therefore, autonomy is not an aspect that the teacher decides whether to have or not, but a permanent quest, releasing composition of their teaching practice, linked to values, reflections, knowledge of oneself and the other, ie, perception, awareness of their professionalism, the importance of his office, as a social and moral commitment and are influenced by the professional identity, which defines the teacher's relationship with his work and with the school community (Contreras 2002).

The Impact of the State Curriculum of São Paulo on the Autonomy of Teachers of Physical Education

The Identity of Teachers and Vocational Training

The positioning of the front teachers of the Curriculum is related to their professional identity from their history of life, initial training and professional performance. Many were influenced by sport or training in their previous training route and had training focused primarily on traditional concepts of physical education, which refer mostly to the appreciation of sports content, contemplated sparingly with respect to cultural dimension of human movement.

Previous experiments training and career, life history and initial training, are sources of knowledge, influencing the representation that teachers build on the teaching practice. Knowledge, according to the author, should be rethought in the formation and transformed in the basis of scientific knowledge related to the profession they are to perform (Tardif and Raymond 2000).

Teachers, said that they "like what they do" and recognize the formative importance of Physical Education for people in general, for teachers and for students in particular - these are considered the main factors that excite on the day of their profession and keeps it (Freitas 2014).

This last factor, for Freire (1996), is of great importance to teacher autonomy as an educational requirement and commitment to the human being who is helping to form. For the author, to establish a relationship of affection with students and to want them demonstrates commitment to educational practice.

These identities can be confronted with a resume and be built by others and not by them. But it can also be reconstructed from new knowledge, according to Dubar (1997: 105): "... simultaneously stable result and temporary, individual and collective, subjective and objective, biographical and structural, of the various processes of socialization which, together, define and build individuals and institutions".

For Freire (1981), this reconstruction of knowledge, from a new model, or reference, is part of the "transitive", change that teachers must go through and need to be aware of, in order to critically analyze such references.

The awareness and critical thinking on the necessary changes to the teaching practice are part, according to the author, of a courageous and participatory education; "... To take man to a new attitude towards the problems of his time and his space" (Freire 1981: 93), this approach is based on a democratic, independent education, as is the practice of freedom.

Freire (1996: 67) highlights the requirement of humility as a relevant factor of an autonomous teacher, recognizing its failure; "... Lacking in humility and real understanding of the role of ignorance in search of knowledge, fear reveals my ignorance ...".

About this failure Freire (2005) refers to the ability to see in himself ignorance, not knowing and being the holder of all knowledge and truth, and opening the other's contribution without feeling offended by accepting this contribution.

On the limits imposed by the Curriculum to teacher autonomy, teachers said to follow the Curriculum they must make adjustments and changes, according to their experience and knowledge.

According to Freire (1981), for a change in teaching practice the education reform should make man a being more aware of their reality, and to participate in changes of their society:

[...] That would allow man to have a brave discussion of their problems. Its insertion in this problem warns of the dangers of their time so that, consciously they gain the strength and courage to fight, rather than to be taken and dragged to destruction of their own self, subjected to others' prescriptions (Freire 1981: 89-90).

And that for Freire is the very development of democracy, an achievement in which man should strive to break free of this situation. Democracy leads man to criticize and participate in the problems of their society, the inclusion of people in the Brazilian political life, is learning about democracy with the very existence of this through the education reform, which faces with the common man, the right to such participation.

Because the initial training of these teachers, many struggled to understand the Curriculum conceptions' ignorance of the underlying concepts that can be connected to the timing and characteristics of the initial training of most teachers and the lack of training in the area specific to physical education.

It appears, therefore, that despite their claims, teachers know the Curriculum but they do not understand it in its entirety. But this does not determine that teachers, do

not know and understand, from studies and reflections, how to relate this understanding with pedagogical practice, critically, what constitutes a position of autonomy, as Freire (1996: 38) mentions "The teaching critical practice, implying the right to think, involves the dynamic movement, dialectical, between doing and thinking about doing".

The Search for Knowledge

An autonomous teacher should seek knowledge, like the knowledge to investigate. Freire (1996) emphasizes that teachers must be aware of their task, and one of the important points is their effort to understand, study, delving into their area, as builder elements, dynamic and continue their professional competence, knowing that "It is the scientific preparation disclosed without arrogance, however, but with humility" (Freire 1996: 103).

Teachers explain that they use diversification strategies and the adequacy of their knowledge with the knowledge presented in the materials to tailor the Curriculum in their teaching practice. This adaptation part, as reported by teachers, is the search for knowledge and improvement, because the state needed to study and seek information and to understand and articulate the proposal to their knowledge and experience is already accumulated - these mechanisms confirmed by engineers say that teachers realized that "they had to recycle" especially regarding the presented content and strategies.

It is noteworthy that even experienced teachers, recognize their limitations and are willing to make changes and adjustments and to rethink their practices, recognizing that the knowledge derived from the Curriculum could become new knowledge to work with.

Teachers have strategies that denote this search for new knowledge, not refuting this "new" body of knowledge that permeates the Curriculum, demonstrating curiosity to understand other knowledge. Freire (1996: 85) says that teaching requires curiosity, for a teacher who seeks autonomy:

The construction or production of the object of knowledge involves the exercise of curiosity, their critical ability to "take away" an object, to observe it, to limit it, to split it, to "surround" the object or make your methodical approach, its ability to compare, to ask.

The Appreciation of Physical Education after Curriculum

The teachers claim that there was an appreciation of Physical Education after the implementation of the Curriculum, a fact that also influences the professional identity built over the teacher's career. Teachers find a positive Curriculum presented in the area of Physical Education, as it always has been in the other disciplines, bringing the status of physical education on the school community (Freitas 2014).

"Surely firstly they realized, the material they receive, according to the content covered sometimes caused some conflicts in their function that didn't work. That content changed the attitude of the students radically, they realize that physical education is not only a class to go down and play ..."

This perception of teachers on the value of physical education from the Curriculum, in the school community, shows that despite the obstacles teachers accepted the "new" situation. Given the experiences of the teachers interviewed they mentioned that they could have avoided, disproved and even denied the Curriculum and put it totally aside, however, they sought to make accept the Curriculum, understanding that it was fit with the experience they had already acquired. For Freire (1996), accept from being new it is also part of a pedagogical practice of an autonomous teacher.

It appears that in the pedagogical practice of PE (physical education) teachers, after the implementation of the Curriculum, have been transformed. Even in the face of the obstacles and the lack of courses, lectures and trainings for further training and understanding of the Curriculum, teachers joined the material, relating them to their knowledge and experience, recognizing also the need to rethink and reframe their views on School Physical Education.

Conclusions

The Curriculum of the State of São Paulo transformed the teaching practice of Physical Education teachers as well as the appreciation of it in the school community. The Curriculum limited the autonomy of Physical Education teachers to prepare their lessons and conduct of pedagogical practice, but at the same time, it has triggered movements that search for new knowledge about teacher discipline. The relationship with the new Curriculum depends on the personal path, training and professional experience, which relies on the professional identity of the teachers.

The autonomy that teachers demonstrate in front of the Curriculum also relates to the objective conditions of the exercise of the pedagogical practice, i.e., it is not just the *proposal that determines this*.

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