

Dossier | Listening and participation in research with (about) children

# Cultural Physical Education in Early Childhood Education: interventions that are attentive to children

Educação Física cultural na Educação Infantil: intervenções sensíveis à escuta

Educación Física cultural en la Educación Infantil: intervenciones sensibles a la escucha

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## Highlights

Ethical treatment mindful of children's consent to participate in research.

Production of pedagogical interventions sensitive to children's listening, interests and agency.

Commitment to the formation of solidary, democratic, multicultural, anti-fascist, anti-racist identities since Early Childhood Education.

## Abstract

The article aimed to problematize the pedagogical experiences with the corporeal practices on the cultural perspective of Physical Education. From the theming of corporeal practices produced in/with the day-to-day in/of a Municipal School of Children's Education (EMEI) from São Paulo, we demonstrate pedagogical interventions sensitive to hearing, agency and children's rights, without abandoning the ethical-political interest and the cultural struggle for the engendering of solidary, democratic, multicultural, non-sexist, non-fascist, non-racist, and non-authoritarian subjectivities since children's Education.

[Resumo](#) | [Resumen](#)

## Keywords

Cultural curriculum. Physical Education. Children's Education. Child. Infancy.

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## Introduction

Cultural Physical Education constitutes a counter-hegemonic proposal. Also known as cultural, culturally oriented or post-critical Physical Education curriculum, this perspective has been produced since 2004, based on research and pedagogical experiences developed and documented by teachers who seek inspiration in the field of post-critical curriculum theories and who act politically and pedagogically under the agency of a set of ethical-political principles in the development of didactic guidelines that aim to deconstruct prejudices, affirm differences and value and encourage the enunciation of student knowledge in classes (Neira, 2008; 2010).

Neira and Nunes (2009) and Neira (2019) present cultural Physical Education as a curricular alternative that aims to thematize bodily practices taken as cultural texts, that is, as temporary and discursive social constructions. Thus, they defend and propose pedagogical experiences that consider the meanings attributed by different social groups during the creation and recreation of games, dances, fights, gymnastics and sports. Recent research (Duarte, 2021; Duarte & Neira, 2023; Neira & Masella, 2023) shows that experiences with the cultural curriculum in Early Childhood Education differ from the tradition of Physical Education and are closer to contemporary propositions of the Sociology of Childhood when they involve childhood as a cultural, social and historical construction subject to change and promote an educational project connected with the demands of children and post-modern times.

The present study is based on the general assumptions and procedures of post-critical methodologies in Education (Paraíso, 2012) and on research in/of/with everyday life (Ferraço & Alves, 2016) to produce, describe and analyze, with teachers and children (daily practitioners) of Early Childhood Education, pedagogical experiences of culturally oriented Physical Education, considering the *narrativeimages*<sup>1</sup> of the participants during and/or from the pedagogical interventions. The interest in sharing research with teachers and children, *thinkingdoing with thinkingdoers*,<sup>2</sup> and not **for** or **about** them, led to the methodological option of research in/of/with everyday life. This type of research seeks to make visible the knowledge and ways of doing things produced in everyday school life and in the various networks that constitute each and every *thinkingdoer* (Ferraço et al., 2018).

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1 For Ferraço and Alves (2005, p. 312), "*narrativeimages* do not describe something that is already given *a priori*, but inscribe meanings in the events experienced, involving, in this production, different *timespaces* practiced and, also, different *doingknowings* of the practicing narrators".

2 Joint writing, *thinkingdoers*, as well as *thinkingdoings*, *timespaces* and other terms, have the intention of overcoming the dichotomy and opposition between peers, a characteristic mark of modern science, which research with/in/of everyday life seeks to overcome (Alves, 2003).

## Methodological aspects

In research into everyday life, the use of narratives allows “a less structuring, less edifying approach to the life lived there and, consequently, possibilities for expressing the networks woven in these lives” (Ferraço, 2007, p. 86).

These narratives involve, at the same time, different places practiced by the narrating subjects and different *doingknowing* relationships of these practicing narrators. [...] So, working with narratives presents us with a possibility of asserting the dimensions of authorship, autonomy, legitimacy, beauty and plurality of aesthetics in the discourses of everyday subjects. Working with narrated stories appears as an attempt to give visibility to these subjects, affirming them as *authors/authoresses*, also protagonists of our studies. (Ferraço, 2007, p. 86)

The *narrativeimages* presented here were produced in the *timespaces* of the thematization of the bodily practices of four classes, with approximately 30 children each, between 4, 5 and 6 years old, two classes in the second half of 2018 and two others in the first half of 2019, from a municipal Early Childhood Education school (EMEI – Escola Municipal de Educação Infantil) located in the capital of São Paulo. Thematizing in the Physical Education cultural curriculum “consists of carrying out various teaching activities in order to provide students with a more elaborate understanding of the countless aspects that characterize any bodily practice” (Neira, 2016, p. 87). The various activities were recorded in a field diary, audio recorder and video camera recorder.

Different authors (Alderson, 2005; Corsaro, 2011; Qvortrup, 2015) draw attention to the ethical issues of research with children, especially the conflicts between the universal rights of participation, protection and provision. In general, they discuss the insufficiency of consent from the adults responsible for those children and point to the need to also seek the children’s consent, even from the smallest and youngest ones. This can occur in different ways, whether by collecting the child’s signature, the oral announcement or the perception of their expressions and attitudes in the context of investigation.

Considering that the EMEI already had documentation from those responsible authorizing the use of children’s images and voices in the unit’s activities, agreement was sought from the Regional Education Board (Diretoria Regional de Ensino), the management team and the School Council. In the collective moments of conversation with the children, after explaining what the researchers intended to do, the kids were invited to express themselves about whether or not they wanted to participate and, if so, to sign a “document”.

**Figure 1**  
Consent form

EMEI NELSON MANDELA

QUERO PARTICIPAR DA PESQUISA SOBRE CULTURA CORPORAL COM O LÉO

SIM
  NÃO

São Paulo, 10/12/2018, MATHEA-K/ME-OLIVEIRO DIBEZ

EMEI NELSON MANDELA

QUERO PARTICIPAR DA PESQUISA SOBRE CULTURA CORPORAL COM O LÉO

SIM
  NÃO

São Paulo, 12/12/2018, ALLAN

Translation – Top: “EMEI Nelson Mandela – I WANT TO PARTICIPATE ON THE RESEARCH ABOUT BODILY CULTURE WITH LÉO (short for Leonardo) – Options: YES or NO”, with “YES” marked in pink. “São Paulo, December 10th 2018, child’s signature.” Bottom: same text, but with “YES” marked in black, “São Paulo, December 12th 2018, child’s signature”.

Source: Duarte (2021).

Some children, despite saying they wanted to participate, marked/colored the “no” option, or both “yes” and “no” boxes. After explanations, some wanted to redo their forms, marking only “yes” and others maintained “no”. In these cases, their speeches and images were not considered. These were busy and interesting moments, in which the children showed joy and satisfaction at “signing a document” and declaring their wishes and wants.

On the first day (August 1st 2018) we started the bodily culture moment<sup>3</sup>, around 11 AM. During the classroom conversation, Teacher Marina suggested that we introduce ourselves and talk about why we were there. We said our names and what we would like to be called (for one of the authors, who conducted the research *in loco*, it’s Léo). Soon the children said that this was also the name of one of their classmates. Léo said that he was a teacher, a colleague of Marina and their other teachers and we were doing research, to find out more about the moment of bodily culture, what was done during that moment and what they thought about it. **Once again we asked if the children would allow us to participate in these moments and if they could help us.**

<sup>3</sup> Moment of bodily culture refers to the time allocated to the thematization of bodily practices in the daily routine of classes at the school unit where the research was developed.

A few seconds of silence, attentive, curious and strange looks and some children started speaking: “we play”, “we do a lot of things”, “soccer”. **After confirming that everything was ok with our participation and that the group was willing to help us**, Marina resumed speaking by asking the children what they had done in bodily culture during the first semester, to which they responded that they studied samba. So the teacher said that now we would discover new things about soccer. (Duarte, 2021, p. 261)

## **| Narrative images in/of everyday life: interventions sensitive to children’s listening and agency**

[...] is it possible to transmit what is being apprehended/learned, in the processes of talking to teachers (**with children**), in the same way as you would transmit what I accumulated/saw/observed in research within the dominant paradigm?

By asking this question, the way I asked it, it means that I understand that another writing is needed in addition to the one already learned. Thus, there is another writing to learn: one that perhaps expresses itself with multiple languages (sounds, images, touches, smells, etc.) and which, perhaps, can no longer be called “writing”; one that does not obey the linearity of exposition, but that weaves, when made, a network of multiple, different and diverse threads; one that asks much more than gives answers; one that doubts in the very act of affirming, that says and unsays, that builds another communication network, that indicates, perhaps, a *writtenspeak*, a *spokenwriting* or a *writtenspokenspeech*. In other words, the issue of narrativity is not only in telling, orally, a fact, but in transcribing it in a certain way. (Alves, 2000, p. 3-4 – bold and insertion by the authors)

It is important to say that we were inspired by the productions of research with/in/of everyday life and, in particular, the reflection presented by professor Nilda Aves in the excerpt above, to justify our way/form of presenting and discussing the narratives below. We purposely tried to give up linearity in the exposition and sought to weave “networks of multiple and diverse threads” that constituted the lived experiences, speeches, listenings, gestures and silences of the children, who are practicing narrators, *authors/authoresses*, protagonists in our study.

The *narrative images* permeated the children's actions, interests, voices and creations. The football game incorporated the children's ideas and, with each doubt or conflict, decisions were made based on the group's suggestions. The children who studied African games faced hardships, but had space to suggest other ways of playing. The Dandara class used their creativity to make the fight movements and, in the wrap-up conversation, they said things like “it was really cool”, “I liked it”, “I also liked it”, “I managed to do everything”, “I did it my way”. In the frevo theme, they exploded with joy, fun and spontaneity.

Listening to children means listening carefully to what they say and/or express in different ways, including gestures and silences. Kishimoto (2013) highlights that listening to children is relevant to understanding learning processes and the narrative is central to the processes of organizing thought and understanding the world. Cruz and Martins (2017, p. 39) consider that listening to children is the first step towards realizing their rights, as “this listening is only fully justified and really

takes on value if it is covered in pedagogical and political practices that take these voices in consideration".

Agency, in turn, is a term used in the field of Childhood Studies to designate children's ability to act independently. "The focus on children's 'agency', in short, means seeing them as competent social actors, as people who have opinions about the world and the recognition that these opinions may be distinct from those of adults" (James, 2009, p 38).

Agency, very briefly, is the ability to act and make things happen and in that sense it was a crucial concept in the beginning, as children were not really thought of as social actors. They were just objects, not people. (Pires & Nascimento, 2014, p. 940)

The assumption of this condition of agency and authorship by children was central to the thematization of bodily practices in early childhood education. It was by recognizing that children act and make things happen that teachers set initial objectives, but were willing to pay attention to events happening:

We think that the initial aims should be: experiencing soccer; and expand and deepen knowledge about this bodily practice. **And we would be alert to the events, meetings, speeches, silences and gestures of the children who would certainly produce other intentions, discussions and possibilities.** ("Thematization: Soccer", "*Tematização Futebol*" in Portuguese – Duarte, 2021, p. 261)

In the thematizations carried out, it was possible to perceive the teachers' concern with alignment with the school's political pedagogical project and the recognition of the community's bodily cultural heritage, that is, the repertoire of knowledge alluding to bodily practices and their representatives, which included the interests and voices of children:

In the first semester of 2018, the teacher had already presented and experienced some African games ("land and sea", "fire on the mountain", "jumping beans"), during the timeslots planned for using the school's game court. **The children's demonstrations of interest and excitement during these games** also motivated (*sic*) the definition of these practices as a topic of study in the second semester. ("Thematization: African games", "*Tematização brincadeiras africanas*" in Portuguese – Duarte, 2021, p. 286)

We had access and shared with the teacher a report that provided comments on the importance of sport in the project to unite South Africa led by Mandela. Upon returning to school after break, Marina commented that she had considered thematizing on soccer. She recalled that **some children always played soccer during park hours, various objects became balls at the children's feet, many wore team shirts and talked about the sport at school, however these movements were almost exclusive to boys.** Furthermore, the soccer World Cup had taken place, and some matches were watched at school, in collective and festive moments with all the classes gathered in front of the screen. **These events also mobilized the children a lot around the topic.** She had also read an article that linked Nelson Mandela to this sport in particular, which he believed had "the power to change the world, the power to inspire and unite a people in a way that would be difficult to achieve otherwise", so he invested in sports, especially in rugby and soccer, as a strategy to unite the people and combat the effects of *apartheid*.



(“Thematization: Soccer”, “*Tematização Futebol*” in Portuguese – Duarte, 2021, p. 260)

When thematizing the fights, the children's curiosity about “what was the Dandara fight like?”, combined with the connection with the class' teaching project, made the teacher choose the theme. In turn, frevo emerged in the mapping of children's knowledge about dances, when Angelina, aged 5, said that she knew how to dance frevo and had an umbrella, which is a characteristic prop of the practice, and the following day she brought it to school, arousing the curiosity of her classmates.

Neves (2018, p. 72) states that “there are three types of mapping of bodily manifestations: mapping of the surroundings, internal mapping and mapping of knowledge”. The three forms help teachers to define study themes and develop themes in tune with the community's physical/bodily heritage. In the Physical Education cultural curriculum, “recognizing the community's bodily culture implies creating conditions for students to express themselves on the topic in all possible ways” (Neira, 2019, p. 15).

To continue, we decided to propose a soccer game. The teacher informed them that they would play on the court **and asked how they were going to organize themselves**. Excited about the proposal, **the children said they just had to divide the teams and play. Arriving on the court, they picked up the ball and started the game**. Run, pull, fall, everyone is on top of the ball, fall, get up, cry, complain, kick, scream, push, kick again, run after the ball... Many things happened. (“Thematization: Soccer”, “*Tematização Futebol*” in Portuguese – Duarte, 2021, p. 263)

With the groups divided, **they had to decide the names of their teams and which ones would start playing**. After many shouts of “Brazil, Flamengo, Corinthians, Brazil, me, us...”, **the children suggested and opted for a random selection via the game *jan ken po* to decide who would start playing, and then used this same method for other decisions during the match**. (“Thematization: Soccer”, “*Tematização Futebol*” in Portuguese – Duarte, 2021, p. 265)

Child 14: Ouch Léo, my leg hurts.

Teacher: Hurting legs? And how do you think it could get easier?

Child 2: **We'll start walking**.

Teacher: Walking?

Child 3: **We'll go like this** (does the movement with feet and hands on the floor as a demonstration).

Teacher: Can you go like this (name of child 3)? And how is everyone going together like this?

Child 3: **You can hold your friend's hand**.

Child 4: **Yeah, that makes it easier**.

Child 2: **Holding the hand of the friend next to us**.

Teacher: Does everyone agree to use your hands?

Children: Yes.

Teacher: So let's try it like this.

(“Thematization: African games”, “*Tematização das brincadeiras africanas*” in Portuguese – Duarte, 2021, p. 341)

In order to explore the gestures of the fights, we fixed the images on the screen around the court and asked the children if they thought they could make movements similar to those they saw in the images. Soon **one child said “we can imitate” and another asked “how are you going to imitate that fight if you don't have a sword?”**. So we asked him and the other children what they

thought we could do **and they started giving ideas: “you can take a stick”; “you can do this by pretending you have a sword”**. (“Thematization: fights”, “*Tematização das lutas*” in Portuguese – Duarte, 2021, p. 342)

The children started circulating and tried to reproduce the fight scenes, in pairs, groups or alone. Two boys spent almost the entire time fighting, several children were calling us adults over to show us that they were replicating the images accurately. We were surprised by the interest shown by the class, moving freely between the images and trying to make gestures with their classmates. Only a few children dispersed and joined other games. While the children were taking positions, we took photographs. (“Thematization: fights”, “*Tematização das lutas*” in Portuguese – Duarte, 2021, p. 302)

**Figure 2**

Imitating the images of fights



Source: Duarte (2021).

We asked for help to distribute the umbrellas, the children were super excited when they saw what it was. **As soon as they received it, they got up from the circle and used it, opening, closing and dancing with their umbrellas.** We played different songs and **the children explored the music and the umbrellas in various and interesting ways, most of them used it to dance, some, at some point, to hit their partner, to throw them in the air and run after them, playing with the wind.** (“Thematization: frevo”, “*Tematização do frevo*” in Portuguese – Duarte, 2021, p. 330)

All the time, **the children called on teacher Alice to show what they were doing, how they knew how to use it, how to dance, how they were having fun with the object.** With the music playing, she also encouraged the children to perform movements and the group to imitate. Some umbrellas broke, we helped with the “repair” and reminded them to take care of the material. **The children ran, danced, played, jumped, interacted with each other and with the object.** (“Thematization: frevo”, “*Tematização do frevo*” in Portuguese – Duarte, 2021, p. 330)



Figure 3

Dancing with umbrellas during the frevo thematization.



Source: Duarte (2021).

Nunes et al. (2021, p. 12) highlight that in the cultural curriculum:

[...] the moments of experience are pure expression of gestures based on the references that students have. [...] It is this playing, dancing, fighting, practicing sports or gymnastics without having to think about it, which enhances the aesthetic dimension, the experience of going through it.

The experiences translate into bodily experiments involving games, dances, gymnastics, sports and fights. Influenced by the ethical-political principle of social anchoring of knowledge, teachers encourage that, initially, bodily practices take place based on the references that children have about the way they occur in society, and then undergo resignifications and modifications according to what they think and desire and the conditions of the school (Neira & Nunes, 2022).

Léo – And is there anyone in this group who fights?

**One child gets up, kicks the air and says “I know how to fight like this”, other children get up and make kicking and punching movements and repeat “I know how to fight like this, look over here Léo”.**

Léo – So whoever knows how to fight, get up and show it...

**Several children did it. (Duarte, 2021, p. 300)**

**Article**

In addition to mapping and experiences, the children's interests and expressions crossed other pedagogical approaches proposed by the teachers during the thematizations, changing the progress of the work, as happened with frevo. In the thematization of the fights, the children's desire for bodily experimentation was intense from the beginning. In the initial conversation circle, they physically showed their representations and fighting skills, transforming the activity into a circle of demonstrations of jabs and blows, which encouraged the expression of their knowledge. The same happened with a didactic situation planned to deepen knowledge about the fights.

**Figure 4**

Video assistance during the thematization of fights



Source: Duarte (2021).

The teachers edited a video with excerpts from different fights for the class to enjoy and with the expectation of talking about the children's knowledge regarding those demonstrations, but they reacted with their bodies, reproducing and creating gestures; they got to their feet and started the blows and confrontations, similar to the fights seen. After a few minutes of spontaneous body experimentation, the teachers proposed a conversation circle. When asked what fights they saw, in addition to oral answers such as "boxing", "capoeira" and "karate", several children demonstrated them with punches and kicks in the air. A boy invited his classmate to compete for space like in sumo. This led to requests from several children to do the same, leading the teachers to organize a moment for everyone to fight each other.



**Article**

In the soccer thematization, three children at different times and sometimes also together spoke about their experiences with the videogame FIFA Soccer and expressed their desire to play with their school friends. The teachers talked about the subject and understood that the proposal fit the theme, as they had talked about different expressions of soccer practiced by people with disabilities and also games such as foosball and button soccer games. So, they borrowed a videogame and organized the matches.

**Figure 5**

Experience with videogames in the soccer thematization, November 14th 2018



Source: Duarte (2021).

The situations described materialize interventions sensitive to listening and the agency of children, as well as constituting a *doingknowing* available to occurrences, to the unexpected, consequently, for authorship and creation.

The *narrativeimages* allow us to see artistic curricular experiences, which develop with events in classes and the participation of children. This takes place with the support of an “artistrying”, “artistrade-curriculum” or “didacticArtist” as proposed by Corazza (2002; 2006; 2013). Based on these concepts, Bonetto (2016, p. 149) argued that pedagogical practice in cultural Physical Education or “curriculum writing” can be taken as “the production of less rigid curricular experiences, inspired by the active and critical participation of teachers and students, who now go from being mere reproducers to being “writer” subjects of the curricular experience”.

It is important to point out that it is not about subordinating pedagogical work to the children’s wishes, but about being attentive and sensitive to the ways in which they respond to proposals, in other words, being attentive to what they say and do. Planning, preparation and pedagogical intentionality are always present because children participate collectively. Thus, “children and their childhood are affected by the society and culture they are part of” (Corsaro, 2011, p. 32). Therefore, in a society so unequal and based on racial and gender violence, ableism and so many other forms of discrimination, children are subject to suffering and/or the production and reproduction of these phenomena, which means they also have repercussions on what they experience when facing aggression, prejudice, racism, misogyny, etc..

At various times there were conflicts of interest on the children’s part, some made proposals for change, others complained, some agreed, others disagreed, some made proposals for their own benefit, some gave up playing, some won, others cried, etc. During games, their relationships regulated activities in different ways. We remained attentive to mediate them in order to support children who were at a disadvantage and think collectively about the

right of everyone to participate, common and diverging interests and care for the Other. (“Thematization: African games”, *Tematização brincadeiras africanas* in Portuguese – Duarte, 2021, p. 343)

While observing and interacting at the park, I approached a group playing soccer (Kawan, Léo, Matheus, Lucas, Yeishon, Rafa). Lucas entered and left the game due to his interest in other games and Yeishon, due to his colleague's exclusion. One of the children prevented Yeishon from playing and also other children by saying “I'm in charge of the game”. (Field diary, August 22nd 2018)

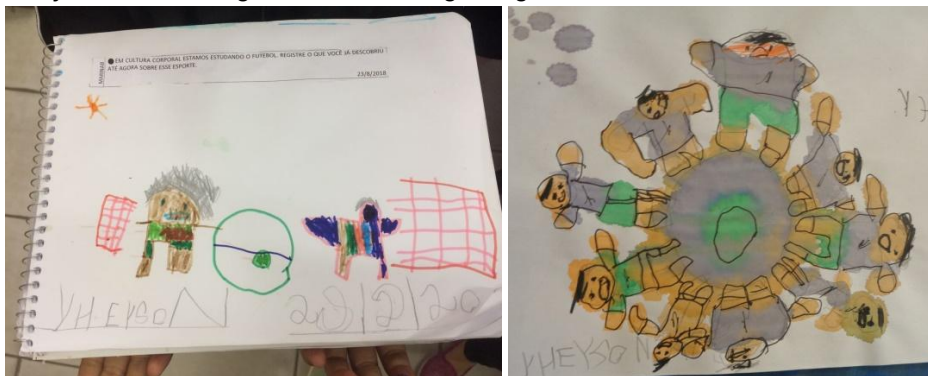
A special way of dealing with conflicts and dissent characterizes the cultural perspective of Physical Education. Neira and Nunes (2009, p. 215-216) evoked these concepts as follows:

In education, critical multiculturalism recognizes the Other (those who are opposed to us, to our way of being, thinking and acting in the world) and seeks to bring everyone, under equal conditions, into the dialogue and conflict of collective construction. It is, in McLaren's words, a 'pedagogy of dissent' that promotes a practice of cultural negotiation, that confronts hierarchical relations of power, that exposes the way in which power was constructed and what strategies it uses to maintain itself in asymmetry with the subjugated. A pedagogy that emphasizes the processes of political and social construction of the supremacy of certain groups and identifies their hegemonic forms of persuasion and continuity in power. [...] For justice to permeate the curriculum, Candau (2008) defends a 'pedagogy of conflict', whose objective is dialogue between positions from different origins, making the teacher the agent in the construction of positive intercultural relationships, remaining as their role the promotion of didactic situations that enable contact and coexistence with difference.

When we provoke conversation about the children's and player's place of birth, we seek to recognize and value a Bolivian child, who we have seen on several occasions being banned from playing and being “trolled” because of the way he speaks. Talking, reading a text and getting children to access, ask questions and give their opinions about migratory processes in the context of soccer themes enhanced Yheyson's participation and the other children's interactions with him, reflected in the drawings.

### Figure 6

Yheyson's drawings at the beginning and end of the soccer thematization



Translated captions: left: “me and my unicorn friend playing soccer”; right: “me and my friends playing”.

Source: Made by Yheyson, 5 years old. Pictures taken by the authors.

Article

The same happened when we heard “she won't play”, “she doesn't know how to play”, “she can't”, “she just stays in a wheelchair” and we reflected on the right to participate in activities of a colleague with a disability. To problematize the situation at a later stage, we organized didactic situations such as watching videos of five-a-side football, a sport for blind people, power soccer, a type of football played in motorized wheelchairs, soccer with crutches and others. And we held a conversation to discuss the expressions we saw in the videos, the adaptations that guarantee access for people with disabilities to sports and society. We took a ball with bells to the conversation so they could understand that there are different ways of feeling, perceiving and knowing the world. These interventions, produced from listening to “exclusive” discourses, mobilized some children who got closer to their disabled colleague and even adopted supportive attitudes such as guiding their colleague's chair in different moments of everyday life, including during soccer.

**Figure 7**

Production of protection and experiences with the participation of Giovanna



Source: the authors.

Gender conflicts were also recurrent, from the demand of a group of girls to interrupt the thematization of soccer – “no soccer” – and the reaction of the boys – “yes soccer” –, through statements that place boys in a position of highlight, “kings of soccer”, with the counterpoint “boys and girls play together”, and by teaching actions encouraging reflection on the topic:

We asked if there are more male or female referees, **Pedro with a very angry face said “on the television I watch soccer there are only male referees and men playing”**. We agreed with him, and Teacher **Marina asked: “why is it like that”? Can we ask Aline this too?**<sup>4</sup> The children agreed and this was also a topic in our conversation with Aline. (“Thematization: Soccer”, *Tematização Futebol* in Portuguese – Duarte, 2021, p. 345)

Inviting representatives of the bodily practices under study has been a very expensive didactic action for teachers who work from the cultural perspective of Physical Education (Neira, 2020), which seeks to recognize and value the community's bodily cultural heritage and the practitioners' know-how. These situations make it possible to expand and deepen knowledge about practices, put positions of different origins into dialogue, hybridize discourses, in addition to creating spaces for contact and coexistence with differences, given the

4 Football/soccer referee invited for an interview formulated by the children.

opportunities to listen to people who occupy different social positions, belong to various ethnic-racial groups, genders, age groups, practice different religions, live in different places, etc.

Ergo, planning the visit of a woman, representative of corporal practice, official futsal referee of the FIFA team and “good at football”, was not a random choice, but in dialogue with the conflicts and representations expressed by the children, in order to tension the hierarchical relationships that permeate soccer/football. The invitations made to Mrs. Pedrina, the school's own cleaning teacher, and to the grandmother of one of the children in the class were also not random, to tell a little about their life stories and childhood games during thematization of African games.

When we informed the children that we would invite “a (male) friend”, a capoeira teacher, some girls demanded that we also invite “a (female) friend” to our conversations about the fight, in a clear demonstration of interest in representativeness, something that surprised at the time and alerted us to the importance of thinking about the didactic choices we make.

Ethnic-racial issues are central to the EMEI project, given the appreciation of African and Afro-Brazilian culture. The daily narratives highlight different moments in which children were involved in these discussions. The study of Nelson Mandela's biography, Afro-Brazilian civilizational values, black women and their legacies for Brazilian society subjectivized children and favored some statements.

Léo: what do you think Mandela is doing in this photo?

Isabele: **it's because they are black, and white people can't hang out with black people**

Multiple children: no

Allan: I see white people there

Marcelo stands up and points to the white player in the photo and says: here, look, white people here.

Léo: there are white people in this photo too

Marina: there are white people and black people too.

Allan: there are all types of people. [...]

Marina: **do you think I chose this just because I wanted to or is there something else?**

Allan: there's something going on, I think you wanted us to play and become friendlier with each other.

Isabele: but it can't be just black children

Child: there are not only black children who are friends.

Marina: yes, there are children of all colors

Allan: it's not just because Nelson Mandela was black, he wanted the world of sport to be happy.

Léo: did anyone want to say anything else?

Child: my mother and I saw a video where a mother and daughter were black and there were many children on the slide and they didn't let her play.

Leo: **and is that cool?**

Child: **no, it's unfair.**

Child: **that can't happen**

Child: and Nelson Mandela also fought against prejudice.

Teacher: And why are you calling this game skipping beans and saying it's an African game?

Child 5: **Because white people changed the name.**

Child 6: Because it came from Africa.

Teacher: Hmm! But I know this game as “little clock”.



Child 1: But it's not little clock.  
 Child 2: **It's a wrong name, it's actually skipping beans.**  
 Teacher: And how do you know it's not the right name?  
 Child 7: **Because the teacher told us that the white people changed the name.**  
 Teacher: And how did Teacher Tathi find out about this?  
 Child 2: She researched it on the internet.  
 Teacher: Did you search on the internet? And is everything on the internet true?  
 Several children: Yessss!  
 Teacher: Could it be? And how come the children at my school, which is here in Brazil, play this game and call it little clock?  
 Child 1: **It's because they don't know the name, white people changed the name.**  
 Child 2: Tell them.  
 Teacher: Did white people change the name of the game? Why?  
 Child 8: **They didn't like black people and changed the name that black people gave.**  
 Teacher: Could it be?  
 Child 5: The teacher told us.  
 Child 9: The teacher researched on the internet.  
 Teacher: And are there other places we can search also? To know more about this?  
 Child 2: We can ask African people. (Duarte, 2021, p. 346-347)

The previous dialogues, added to the expressions and gestures at the moments in which they occurred, made it clear that some children had discourse lines of thinking that divide and segregate people based on race. Even though we may have occasionally slipped up and simply replaced discourses, our interest has always been to multiply, not replace. For this reason, as Santos (2016) points out, the problematization of representations, permeated by the deconstruction of discourses, has been immanent in the cultural curriculum of Physical Education.

The aforementioned author states that problematization emerges as an artifact of essential pedagogical practice to suspend naturalized discourses and circulate a multiplicity of texts that make up cultures. In turn, Santos Junior (2020) associated problematization with the motto “asking, we walk” of the Zapatista movement, as it encourages questions and listening. In the themes developed with Early Childhood Education, questions were very present resources in teaching interventions.

Throughout the game **we problematize the rules: who starts the game? Where does it start? Was it a foul or wasn't it? Where does each team score? It went out, who kicked it? Whose ball is it? Are you allowed to pick it up with your hand? Is this your team?** In the final conversation, the children demanded the presence of the judge and complained about their colleagues who get the ball and do not pass it over to anyone. (“Thematization: soccer”, “*Tematização do futebol*” in Portuguese – Duarte, 2021, p. 347)

Teacher: were you dancing or playing?  
 Some children: dancing.  
 Some children: playing.  
 Child 1: first dancing, then playing.  
 Teacher: Is freeze tag a dance or a game?  
 Some children: it's dancing.  
 Some children: it's a game.  
 Child 2: It's a dance game.  
 Teacher: were the movements you were doing before the freeze tag dance movements?

Several children: yes.  
 Teacher: show your movements João (João shows).  
 Teacher: is this dancing?  
 Some kids: it's hip-hop Léo.  
 Teacher: Maria, show how you were dancing (Maria shows).  
 Some children: it's samba.  
 Child 3: mine was Rock 'n roll (stands up and shows the gesture by shaking his head).  
 Child 4: Paulo also does passinho [translator note: passinho is a type of street dance move], teacher.  
 Some children started to sing.  
 Teacher: and in this song, what is the dance like?  
 Several children: funk. ("Thematization: frevo", *Tematização do frevo* in Portuguese – Duarte, 2021, p. 317)

Asking allowed us to listen/map, problematize, cast doubt, suspend certainties, destabilize, confront, deconstruct and reframe. "Asking, we walk" was a constant stance throughout the themes, corroborating Santos Junior (2020) when he considers that this makes the mapping more susceptible to students' knowledge, guaranteeing the necessary conditions for negotiation and dialogue.

It is impossible to deny that the teacher often could not resist the taste of the answers, especially those that confirmed her ideas and desire for truth. However, she also made an effort not to answer everything, to cultivate doubt, uncertainty and escape the traps of language by performing addition operations, of "thinking with AND, instead of thinking IS, thinking for IS", as Deleuze and Parnet suggest (1998, p. 71). Language allows addition operations, rather than identity statements and binary oppositions.

Ribeiro (2015, p. 78) considers it necessary to "combat linguistic forms based on dualisms, as they form an image of thought captive of identity norms". For the author, this issue is not restricted to the linguistic field, as thinkers draw attention to cultural organization, identity norms and power relations, highlighting the intrinsic condition of the relationship between language and power, hence why "any discussions of the politics or micropolitics orders are inseparable from problematizations about language" (Ribeiro, 2015, p. 79).

There was a moment when we asked the children to find photos "with fat people fighting" and a child who was next to us said quietly, "**Léo, my mother said it's not 'fat', it's 'an overweight person'". So we asked "what weight?"**" and the child raised their hands with a gesture and expression of not knowing. ("Thematization: fights", *Tematização das lutas* in Portuguese – Duarte, 2021, p. 349)

In an excerpt of the letter there was the following statement "I adooore dancing frevo" and then a child expressed "you can't, you can only adore the Lord". The speech took place amidst other speeches and parallel conversations and was not initially noticed. When the excerpt was repeated again...

**Child: "you can only adore God", with an angry expression.**

**Léo: when Henrique said that he "adores frevo" he is saying that he really likes listening to and dancing frevo, and that he is very excited and happy and really likes dancing. Did you understand?**

Several children: yes.

**The expression of the child who spoke about God changed and they seemed to understand another meaning of what was being said.**

(“Thematization: frevo”, “*Tematização do frevo*” in Portuguese – Duarte, 2021, p. 349)

Giving up affirmations and certainties is not an easy task. Changes in the way of thinking and acting are not simple either, they generate fear, insecurity, and put at risk stability, authority and what is understood as school “success”. It was no surprise that the teachers highlighted the difficulty of dealing with the lack of definition of a “final production” and with the decrease in “control” during the thematizations to increase the children’s listening and authorship during the process.

## **| Final considerations**

With the aim of producing, describing and analyzing, with Early Childhood Education teachers and children, pedagogical experiences of culturally oriented Physical Education, it was possible to highlight interventions sensitive to the listening and agency of young children. The selected *narrativeimages* allow us to visualize pedagogical approaches that are attentive to children's voices and interests. The didactic situations that characterize the cultural curriculum of Physical Education were susceptible to listening to children and constituted a pedagogical practice that considered their voices, implementing children's rights.

In this sense, the experiences produced with cultural Physical Education in Early Childhood Education are in line with the propositions of the Sociology of Childhood and corroborate the defense of children as citizens with rights and producers of culture and childhood as a cultural, social and historical construction subject to change. Emerging as a counter-hegemonic curricular alternative, which values and affirms differences and acts with an interest in the formation of solidary, democratic, anti-racist, anti-fascist, anti-sexist, anti-LGBTphobic subjects, bearing in mind that, when listening to prejudices, it intends and acts to problematize them and deconstruction, as pedagogical action, as a form of cultural policy, requires an “intentional intervention” that is always ethical. In the cultural curriculum, developing the theme of a bodily practice also implies getting involved in political actions and cultural struggles.

This article faces the limits of its own format, which makes it impossible to address the totality of what was experienced and perceived throughout the interventions. In its favor is the characteristic of research with everyday life that assumes unfinishedness and openness as necessary conditions, as well as recognizing that the stories told are the authors' choices, as they inscribe the events involving the *timespaces* practiced and the *doingknowing* of their narrators.

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## Resumo

O artigo objetivou problematizar as experiências pedagógicas com as práticas corporais na perspectiva cultural da Educação Física. A partir da tematização de práticas corporais produzidas nos/com os cotidianos em/de uma Escola Municipal de Educação Infantil (EMEI) paulistana, evidenciamos intervenções pedagógicas sensíveis à escuta, agência e direitos das crianças, sem abandonar o interesse ético-político e a luta cultural pelo engendramento de subjetividades solidárias, democráticas, multiculturais, não machistas, não fascistas, não racistas e não autoritárias desde a Educação Infantil.

**Palavras-chave:** Currículo cultural. Educação Física. Educação Infantil. Criança. Infância.

## Resumen

El artículo tuvo como objetivo problematizar experiencias pedagógicas con prácticas corporales desde la perspectiva cultural de la Educación Física. A partir de la tematización de prácticas corporales producidas en/con la vida cotidiana en/de una Escuela Municipal de Educación Infantil (EMEI) de São Paulo, evidenciamos intervenciones pedagógicas sensibles a la escucha, la agencia y los derechos de los niños, sin abandonar la interés ético-político y la cultura de lucha engendrando subjetividades solidarias, democráticas, multiculturales, no machistas, no fascistas, no racistas y no autoritarias desde el jardín de infantes.



**Palabras clave:** Currículum cultural. Educación Física. Educación Infantil. Niño. Infancia.

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