107 - CAPOEIRA: A PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL ART OF CORPORAL CARE

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The inclusion of African history and culture in the Brazilian school curriculum after the Law 10.639/2003 has encouraged educators to seek ways to value the contributions of african cultures in the education, as well as in the development of the Brazilian society. This paper aims to highlight the notion of “capoeira” as a cultural activity and its possible contributions to physical education in Brazilian schools.

Capoeira can be conceived as an art that disciplines body, mind, as well as a cultural expression that enriches life. Invented in Brazil, capoeira has gained the world and nowadays it is practiced in over 170 countries, being a part of the formal education in New York's schools.

In the history of blacks in Brazil, capoeira has played an important role in the development of corporeality and spirituality. One of its main features was to maintain a practice of resistance. In times of repression and oppression of slavery, it served to prepare bodies and minds for the construction of black resistance. It was performed as a protection against violence and repression of colonizers. In this way, slaves could face punishment and practices of violence imposed by planters. Capoeira was forbidden by slave owners who knew the importance of such practices for blacks. It was, therefore, a martial art and an instrument of physical and cultural resistance. Among the slaves it served to preserve the elements of African culture, relieving the stress of labor, while ensuring the maintenance of bodily and mental health.

Capoeira in Brazil is organized into three types, whose differences can be seen in the movements, as well as in the musical rhythm. The oldest pace was developed in the earliest days of slavery and is called “Capoeira Angola”. It is characterized by a slower pace and strokes occur closer to the ground. At this rate, the bodies exhibit a great deal of malice. There is another rhythm called “Capoeira Regional”. It is a mixture of elements of Capoeira Angola with quick movements following the beat of drums and the sound of the berimbau. A third rhythm of capoeira is called “Contemporary”. Today it is the most practiced among “capoeiristas” in the different regions of the country.

Participants of capoeira place themselves in a circle, which is called “roda”. According to the understanding of the masters of capoeira, the disposition of individuals in a circle helps the flow of energy between participants.

The circle allows us to see each other, feeling each other, commune with each other. It's in the circle that we know our fellow. It promotes the exchange of energy, core value of the afro-Brazilian culture, and strengthens the bonds of communication between everyone. It is the place to cultivate and worship our mystic. (Master Irany)

According to Oliveira, presenting the work of Milton José Ferreira da Silva, Body Language in Capoeira, the circle "appears as a symbolic representation of the world. It drives the movement. And moviment, in this context, is thought. The thought in the “roda” is the movement” (SILVA, 2003, p.15).

The dynamics of the circle is sustained by basic musical instruments: drums, berimbau and agogô, that make up an orchestra for the spectacle of bodies. In this show, people express the physical education of their bodies in the “dance of movements”. In the movements it is possible to notice the degree of integration of one's body in its multiple dimensions.

According to Silva (2008), one of the first moves to be studied in capoeira is the “ginga”. It is the main foundation of capoeira as an art. “In capoeira there is no need to prepare the body for action, as it swings, the body prepares itself in action" (p.81). Requirements - such as concentration, flexibility, strength, self-control, cunning, endurance, knowledge, education and care - are integrated and reveal a consciousness of the body, establishing a synchronization of the subject with the world. Body consciousness is gained during capoeira and enables individuals to become conscious of themselves, of their body, and of their potential for social interaction.

The goals of capoeira as a cultural art are aligned with the objectives of physical education, since both aim at the development of psychomotricity, an indispensable element of humans' ominlateralidade. In other words, the multiple dimensions of human existence require systematic care, not only for the body, but for the interfaces of the body with the social, emotional and spiritual dimensions of human life.

BENEFITS TO THE BODY

We have argued that capoeira is an art that promotes the integral development of the body. Movements performed in the dance of capoeira exercise all muscles. Participants in the circle, in a short period of time, can see profound changes in their bodies. Among the various changes identified are: the reduction of tension, a sharp increase in muscle reflexes, in addition to a considerable gain in muscle strength.

In the logic of the benefits offered by capoeira to the human body, it is possible to highlight the maintenance of the of body's balance, often in extremely difficult positions. The dexterity and agility come as a consequence of the practice of capoeira taken seriously. Given the context of its emergence as an instrument of defense, speed in movements constituted as an additional gain to the body. Constant exercises eventually develop in adepts of capoeira a great capacity for endurance and a lot of coordination, both for defense and offense.

In the seventies shirts of physical education came with a slogan “men sana in corpore sano”. Teachers encouraged physical exercise as something that, besides doing good for the body, did good to the mind. A healthy mind in a sound body, said

the teacher, would be better prepared to assimilate knowledge, being more creative and aware.

From this perspective, authors that study capoeira remarked that besides the benefits to the body, capoeira assisted in the development of creativity and self-control. Capoeira sharpens the individual attention, since its practice requires constant concentration in the movements of the “roda”. Persistence is another contribution, because nobody can achieve perfection in the first blows. It takes much training, which entails passage through different stages, also called "strings". Many fears developed in daily life are overcome through repeated exercises and by the confidence acquired by practitioners. Their courage is progressive in the process of bodily movements.

The practice of capoeira in and out of schools is one of the signs that we live in a society marked by cultural diversity. Many of these cultural traits are associated with African cultural matrices. However, prejudices rooted in the social imagination have systematically underestimated the contributions of these cultural matrices. From this perspective, capoeira as a expression of the afro-Brazilian culture finds resistance, not being accepted as an activity that can be taught and practiced in physical education.

Because of prejudice, is not yet a reality in Brazilian society the use of capoeira in physical education. Our study about “Religious Intolerance” (ROCHA; PUGGIAN, 2011) reveals that students confuse the practice of capoeira with a religious manifestation. As a result of prejudice, many students refuse to participate in the activities proposed. Physical education, for dealing with body movements in the perspective of physical care and mental health, has a privileged space in the curriculum for the practice of capoeira in school. Given the new determinations of the Law of Guidelines and Bases o Education, the practice of capoeira in schools can mean the rescue of key elements in the history of Brazilian people, giving bodily significance to the human existence as proposed by African cultures that constitute Brazil.

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CAPOEIRA: A PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL ART OF CORPORAL CARE

ABSTRACT:

In this paper we argue that capoeira as a cultural expression of African origin has the potential to promote the integral development of students, meeting the goals set by the National Curriculum Parameters (NCP) for Physical Education. We justify our argument by providing a brief history and main features of capoeira, which combines music, movement and spirituality as a way to fulfill individuals' needs. We remark that prejudice can not shadow the contribution of capoeira to promote creativity, attention, self-esteem, and psychosocial equilibrium, all essential to the exercise of citizenship. We conclude defending the inclusion of capoeira in the curriculum to meet the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education, which determines that our African cultural heritage must be taught through interdisciplinary approaches in elementary and middle school. We conclude that contact with such practices puts in the horizon of possibilities for teaching and learning the denaturalization of stigmas attached to Brazilian culture, as well as elements to overcome the prejudices regarding contributions coming from the African-Brazilian universe.

KEYWORDS: Capoeira, Physical Education, Corporeality

VOLAILLE: ART DE SOINS PHYSIQUES ET SPIRITUELS DU CORPS

RESUME

Dans ce papier nous soutenons que la capoeira comme une expression culturelle d'origine africaine, a le potentiel pour promouvoir le développement intégral des élèves, répondant aux objectifs fixés par le curriculum Paramètres national (PCN) pour l'éducation physique. Nous justifions notre argumentation à partir d'un bref historique et les principales caractéristiques de la capoeira, qui allie musique, le mouvement et la spiritualité comme un moyen d'épanouissement des individus. Nous avertissons que le préjudice ne peut submerger la contribution de la volaille afin de promouvoir la créativité, l'attention, l'estime de soi, et l'équilibre psychologique indispensable à l'exercice de la citoyenneté. Nous concluons défendre l'inclusion de la capoeira dans le programme pour répondre à la loi de directives et bases de l'Education nationale, qui prévoit l'amélioration de la matrice culturelle africaine dans une approche interdisciplinaire à l'école élémentaire et intermédiaire. Nous maintenons que le contact avec une telle pratique met l'horizon des possibilités pour l'enseignement et l'apprentissage de la stigmatisation attachée à la dénaturalisation de la culture brésilienne ainsi que des éléments pour surmonter les préjugés à l'égard des contributions de l'univers afro-brésilien.

CAPOEIRA: ARTE DE CUIDADO FÍSICO Y ESPIRITUAL DEL CUERPO

RESUMEN

En este documento se argumenta que la capoeira como una expresión cultural de origen africano, tiene el potencial para promover el desarrollo integral de los estudiantes, el cumplimiento de los objetivos establecidos por la Parámetros Curriculares Nacionales (PCN) de la Educación Física. Justificamos nuestro argumento por medio de una breve historia y características principales de la capoeira, que combina la música, el movimiento y la espiritualidad como una forma de realización del individuo. Advertimos que el prejuicio no puede abrumar a la contribución da capoeira para promover la creatividad, la atención, la autoestima y el equilibrio psicológico fundamental para el ejercicio de la ciudadanía. Llegamos a la conclusión defender la inclusión de la capoeira en el plan de estudios para cumplir con la Ley de Directrices y Bases de la Educación Nacional, que prevé la mejora de la matriz cultural de África en forma interdisciplinaria en la escuela primaria y secundaria. Mantener el contacto con esta práctica pone en el horizonte posibilidades para la enseñanza y el aprendizaje desnaturalizar el estigma asociado a la cultura brasileña, así como elementos para superar los prejuicios a respecto a las contribuciones del universo afro-brasileña.

CAPOEIRA: ARTE FÍSICA E ESPIRITUAL DE CUIDAR DO CORPO

RESUMO

Neste texto argumentamos que a capoeira, como uma expressão cultural de matriz africana, tem o potencial de promover o desenvolvimento integral dos estudantes, atendendo aos objetivos definidos pelos Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais (PCN) para a Educação Física escolar. Justificamos nossa argumentação a partir de um breve histórico e das principais características da capoeira, que associa música, movimento e espiritualidade como forma de realização plena dos indivíduos. Alertamos que os preconceitos não podem subjugar a contribuição da capoeira na promoção da criatividade, da atenção, da auto-estima, e do equilíbrio psico-social, essenciais ao exercício da cidadania. Concluímos defendendo a inserção da capoeira no currículo a fim de atender à Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional, que estabelece a valorização das manifestações culturais de matrizes africanas de forma interdisciplinar no ensino fundamental e médio. Sustentamos que o contato com tal prática coloca no horizonte do ensino e aprendizagem possibilidades de desnaturalização dos estigmas arraigados na cultura brasileira, bem como elementos para a superação dos preconceitos em relação às contribuições advindas do universo afro-brasileiro.

PALAVRAS CHAVES: Capoeira; Educação Física, Corporeidade