101 - METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES IN KIDS SWIMMING WITH EMPHASIS ON PLAYFULNESS

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INTRODUCTION

Swimming is one of the physical activities which people can practice with minimal restrictions, from birth to end of life. However, it is interesting, while learning how to swim, to introduce students to exercises and strategies which are consistent with their educational and maturational levels, after all, the tension generated by the expectation of doing something right or making a mistake is present during learning. Maturation is the body's neurophysiological state of readiness to perform certain tasks being them independent or not of environmental factors; therefore the maturational level does influence learning (LIMA, WU 1999). Thus, it becomes coherent to reflect upon playfulness at early stages of swimming without focusing only on technique. Global activities, in which the most important is performing the movements, even if not technically perfect, what reminds us of those children who learn to swim or play soccer by themselves, most of the times in a relaxed environment, without many demands or pressure. This does not mean that students should not be oriented, but that guidelines should be at their reach (ibid.).

Duran (2005) points out that when teaching something new to children, this creates some anxiety and fear in them and to reduce or even break these barriers the instructor could make use of pedagogical resources such as plays, songs, games, since this way it is possible to low students' anxiety, make them relax and also show that the teacher could be a child with him again, that both are in the same world (2005 DURAN cited by ARCILIO et. al 2011).

Some studies reveal the influence of playfulness in kids learning how to swim, they show that teaching and learning become more joyful and pleasurable. Pereira (2001) puts in his work a relationship with the "make-believe" world through thematic swimming lessons used as a working tool and naming his classes as "playful and educational environment", which include telling stories to children and involving them in a world of fantasy and achievements (ibid, ibid).

Swimming, like any other sport in the area of Physical Education can provide an interrelation between pleasure and technique through creative teaching procedures, such as playing games, since it aims to child development (Souza, et al, 2011). Thinking this way, it is possible that many questions come up about the effectiveness of playful activities in kids swimming classes, for instance, how it works in a real class. It is exactly the scope of this study: what is the importance of playfulness in the process of learning how to swim by kids?

Based on this, the present study was unleashed from the observation of swimming lessons for children, aiming at investigating the methodological procedures which contribute to teaching kids how to swim also trying to identify the importance of playful moments in children's learning at this period. These were the underlying points of the study: list the main activities carried out at swim schools in Guarapuava - PR and identify activities that contribute to water adaptation during the beginner's stage for kids, providing opportunities for the professionals to reflect upon their practices.

METHODOLOGY

This study is characterized by a qualitative descriptive research. Three swim schools in Guarapuava / PR and four swimming instructors for kids of these institutions compose this sample (it is a small sample because the data was collected during fall/winter and kids do not usually attend swimming classes at this time, besides, the number of swim schools and kids instructors in this city is also reduced). Two practical classes were observed from each instructor of each swim school, in order to identify which recreational activities were used with the kids. During the observation, the main aspects analyzed were the procedures used by the teacher, the materials he / she used during the activities proposed; kind of language used with the students, if there were relatives watching the class, which swimming styles were trained and if recreational activities are used to develop the class. For a satisfactory analysis of these items, the two class observations of each teacher were enough. The next step was a semi structured interview conducted with each of the swimming instructors of these schools, which was recorded and transcribed so that the collected data could be analyzed by means of speeches. This interview consisted of questions such as: what is your major? how long have you worked with swim classes for kids? what are the methodological procedures you use (which material resources; techniques, breathing exercises)? what are the difficulties you find in your work? how receptive are students in relation to the activities you propose? what is the participation of families in the learning process? what were the benefits that parents felt after their children started learning how to swim? does the weather in this city influence the number of students in class? how long does it usually take for kids to adapt to the water?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Class observations were conducted at each institution before the interview with teachers, which allowed observing impartially how teachers work, the methodology and language used by them, the content worked through and materials used during class. Among the main criteria for analysis, the items in Table1 are highlighted.

Table 1: Results of class observation analysis at the participant swim schools:

Target audience	Playfulness	Trained styles	Material used	Instructor language
Instructor A	Used in the begining anda t the end of class	Crawl Backstroke	Board Water Noodle	Clear and suitable to children in the proposed activities.
Instructor B	Present in the development of the class.	Crawl Backstroke	Board Water Noodle Hoops	Suitable to this age students.

Instructor C	Predominant in some activities.	Crawl Backstroke	Plataform Board Water Noodle Hoops	Expressed him / herself clearly during the explanation of activities.
Instructor D	Present all the time.	Crawl Backstroke Breaststroke kick	Board Water Noodle Slide	Easily understood by the kids. He / she used playful examples to explain movements.

analysis of the results obtained from class observations enabled us to verify that all teachers, with greater or lesser emphasis, work with playful activities in their classes through various forms such as music, games, fantasy, animal imitation. The intention of teaching the child in a joyful and pleasurable way was perceived. Thus, it can be assumed that students perform the movements of swimming styles that are being taught with much more enthusiasm, which encourages interaction with the teacher and the group, making them feel safer in the water.

In terms of content developed, it was found that the styles worked in the lessons observed were: crawl and backstroke that are the most suitable for the age group in question (LIMA, WU 1999). Only one of the teachers began teaching the breaststroke kick with his students as they had already mastered the stroke and kick of crawl and backstroke.

During classes the teachers made use of several floating materials such as boards, water noodles, hoops to train diving with their students. One of the instructors used a slide near the wading pool, so the kids could play, lose the fear and engage in the activity. Thus, the resources with shapes, colors and nice textures instigated playfulness and provided students with joy and safety.

With regard to the positioning and the language used by teachers, it is worth noting that they always remained close to their students, so that everyone could be watched and also to enable students to understand explanations and demonstrations of exercises. It is important to emphasize that the language, examples and resources (such as songs and games) become essential when working with this age group once they draw students' attention, increase focus and make the class funnier.

However, nowadays, it still seems to predominate in the area of Physical Education the kind of swim teaching strongly oriented to sports, restricted to the teaching of the basic four swimming styles (Xavier Filhoand Manoel, 2002). It is not possible to teach anything without having the pressupposition that learning will take place (NEIRA, 2003). And for Velasco (1997) play is a moment of relaxation, socialization of all. It is an educational and even formative process that influences emotional intellect and body.

Based on these inferences, the following table 2 presents the responses from the semi structured interview, whose analysis contributes to this discussion.

Table 2: Results of the analysis of semi structured interviews conducted with teachers.

Target Audience	Methodology	Receptivity	Difficulties Found	Swimming Benefits	City Weather
Instructor A	Participative Various resources	Good participation in the activities proposed.	Water adaptation	Socialization	Negative Influence Low Attendance Evasion
Instructor B	Playful Participative	Good receptivity, Students can suggest activities	None	Socialization	Negative Influence Low Attendance Evasion
Instructor C	Own Methodology/ flexible	Great because kids love water	Pool depth	Helps recover from respiratory disorders	Negative Influence Low Attendance Evasion
Instructor D	Playful	Pretty receptive, Students learn by playing	Interference of parents	Socialization and good sleep	Negative Influence Low Attendance Evasion

According to the data collected it is possible to infer that, with respect to promoting playful activities in swimming classes for kids as a methodological procedure, the participating instructors make use of playful activities, with greater or lesser emphasis, being that reflected on their answers and during their classes, which promote both personal and social development concerning attitudes and methodological concepts.

As for schooling, all the participant instructors have a Bachelor's degree in Physical Education and two of them also have a qualification for teaching. Two out of four instructors have a Sensu Lato postgraduation course. This is an indication that all the teachers surveyed are able to work with kids swimming, what does not determine their performances as teachers but their habilitation. It was observed that instructors with a qualification in teaching are self-assured and have more suitable didactic procedures for the development of their classes. This is due to the fact that during graduation they had disciplines that covered the process of teaching and learning.

With regard to working experience, only one of the four instructors interviewed had long experience - 27 years. The others recently graduated and have been working with kids swimming for a few years. During class observations it was noticeable the fact that the instructo who has been working with kids swimming for longer, tends to use a more technicist methodology, despite the use of some entertaining aspects like songs and plays as well.

From those instructors who began working more recently with kids swimming (on average 1-5 years), it was noticeable during class observations that there is a higher incidence of recreational activities as a methodological aspect in their classes, thus demonstrating that the period in which they completed their undergraduate course influences the performance of the professional because they value more the playful activities in their lessons. This is evidenced by the instructor D's speech who has been working with kids swimming for a year:

... "My way of working is more recreational and I make use of play in order to teach children to swim in a more playful

environment, so some more varied materials as a means of working and playing, of course during the game I can work with breathing, displacement in the water , their own adaptation to water since that makes an activity that is not forced, that makes them feel as safe as possible, they will develop during the process while I will add practical and theoretical knowledge (PROFESSOR D).

Thus, we can see that playful activities and cooperative games have the power of fixing any proposed exercise in students' minds, relaxing and masking the goal of the game so that they learn in a fun and quick way, bringing along the pleasure to perform the proposed activities . It is by playing that a kid develops, exercising their potential. It is surely revealed by Mauricio (2001, apud Marcellino 2003) the most used pedagogy in swimming lessons makes use of specific technical resources based on the repetition of movements, which makes learning discouraging and causes a large number of dropouts. The ludic activity provides students with a better interaction with water, facilitating their adaptation to the new environment.

In Allen's research (1996, cited, ibid) there were two classes, in one the formal method was applied and, in the other, playful activities were used. The students of the formal group went to class just to learn how to swim and nothing else while the other group used this moment of class to swim, acquire knowledge concerning swimming, its movements, their bodies and could also interfere in the class creating new proposals.

Playfulness was present as methodological aspect in the observed classes of those three instructors that had been working with kids swimming for a short time. The observed classes of the instructor with a longer working experience show the use of a more technicist approach, aiming at the training of swimming styles: crawl and backstroke for this age group of 4 to 6-year old students.

As for the benefits kids acquire when starting swimming classes, instructors mentioned a significant improvement in respiratory disorders, cases of diagnosed hyperactivity and even parents have reported progress in their kids behaviour.

Among the main difficulties instructors found in the development of their jobs, the ones they highlighted were: the cold weather in the city of Guarapuava ⁄ PR, followed by the depth of the pool and the heterogeneous groups (while some are still adapting to water, others are already learning the swimming styles).

When analyzing family engagement in the learning process, it was possible to state that it happens in the form of taking and picking them up at classes and talking to the instructors when there is a difficulty. Some families use to stay close to their kids, watching them during classes, what is seen as a negative aspect once it disturbs the lesson, as an instructor mentioned, the kid will pay more attention to the parents than to the teacher. Another instructor, on the other hand, stated that kids participate and mind the rules better when their parents are watching. Another important influence of parents participation in the learning process of their kids is what happens during the holliday season when students easily learn the exercises applied in the beginner's phase because they have already had some learning at home: vacation trips, club pools. One of the interviewed instructors affirmed that: “50% of the families are concerned about whether their kids like the classes or not and 50% are concerned only if their kids are the best in class and if there will be any competitions in the year their kids could attend”.(PROFESSOR D).

Nevertheless, it was verified the weather in Guarapuava/PR, which is classified as subtropical and humid with a severe winter and frequent frosts, has an annual average temperature of 16,8°C, the highest is 36°C and the lowest 6,8°C (CityHall of Guarapuava, 2012). It is, therefore, noticeable that the weather influences the amount of students in swimming classes. According to an instructor: “our temperatures tend to be very low on winter days and this is not favorable to swimming” (INSTRUCTOR A).

CONCLUSION

As expected, the procedures recommended in the study were performed successfully reaching its goals. The methodology for the teaching of swimming must be according to the age, interests and needs of each group. The exposed here denotes as responsibility of the Physical Education teacher who works with kids swimming, to articulate playful activities in class in order to promote better educational background for students, prompting the formation of positive attitudes and concepts and working harmoniously content and practices, respecting students and their personal culture.

In dealing with the issue addressed by this study the benefits gained by students through a ludic methodology used by teachers are clear, some of the include joy, pleasure, creativity, spontaneity, group interaction and ease of this age students to assimilate the basic movements of swimming styles especially the backstroke and crawl.

At last, the teacher is responsible for the context developed in the playful dialogue among the student, the toy and the space in a proportion where the kid feels valued, promoting the development of being integrated to the whole process of learning, there is, the more interaction they have, the greater curiosity and the willingness to participate and be in the water will be. As we can analyze, kids swimming provides several benefits, once it is a sport that helps in growth, helps control respiratory disorders, benefits psychomotor development and strengthens the beginning of the kids personality in the evolutionary process.

Therefore, it emerges as important the valorization of the role of playfulness in Physical Education and, in particular note the role of Physical Education under graduation courses to approximate the reflection on teaching practices to the light of specialized literature and then raise professionals' awareness about the importance of playful activities at kids swim schools. Even though this study was completed, it does not make this discussion exhaustible, on the contrary, we believe to be contributing, through the dissemination of knowledge in this instance built, for other future relevant considerations to the theme.

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METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES IN KIDS SWIMMING WITH EMPHASIS ON PLAYFULNESS

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to reveal the methodologies used in kids swimming at three swim schools in the city of Guarapuava / PR. These schools were visited and two classes of kids swimming were observed from each instructor. A semi structured interview was also conducted with the same instructors and later on it was qualitatively analyzed. The objectives of this study were to list the main activities developed at kids swim schools in Guarapuava / PR and identify if instructors use play activities and whether they contribute to water adaptation for swimming beginners. The choice in researching the influence of recreation and play in teaching kids to swim takes place because it is a pertinent topic and still underexplored in the place where the research was being conducted. The main results obtained highlight that teachers make use of playful activities through various resources. Important nuances on the topic were unveiled through their speeches. Based on the data collected and analyzed, it can be concluded that playfulness is important and, it is up to the kids instructor, working as a mediator of the learning process, to use the playful component as a facilitator tool of learning.

KEYWORDS: kids swimming, teaching methodology, playfulness.

ASPECTES MÉTHODOLOGIQUES DE LA NATATION INFANTILE SUR LE POINT DE VUE LUDIQUE

RÉSUME

Le but de cette étude était révéler les méthodes utilisées en la natation infantile dans trois écoles de natation de la ville de Guarapuava/PR. Visites ont été effectué dans les écoles de natation afin d'observer deux classes de chaque enseignant et d'effectuer des entrevues avec eux, postérieurement analysés qualitativement. Ont été identifié les principales activités adoptées, la capacité de chaque enseignant d'utiliser des activités ludiques dans la initiation de la natation infantile et l'efficacité de ces activités. L'influence des activités ludiques dans la natation infantile est un sujet pertinent, surtout parce qu'il existe peu études dans l'région. Il a été constaté que les enseignants utilisent des activités ludiques et utilisant différents moyens d'enseignement, ce qui démontre que l'activité ludique est important pour les courses de natation infantile, principalement, dans la natation de bébés. L'enseignant doit utiliser le component ludique comme instrument de l'apprentissage.

MOTS –CLÉS: Natation infantile; méthodologie de l`enseignement; ludicité.

CUESTIONES METODOLÓGICAS EN LA NATACIÓN INFANTIL CON MENCIÓN EN LUDICIDADE

RESUMEN

El presente estudio tiene como propósito develar las metodologías utilizadas en la natación para niños de tres escuelas de natación del municipio de Guarapuava/PR. Se llevaron a cabo en las escuelas de natación donde fueron observadas dos clases de natación para niños de cada uno de los maestros en su actuación, que también fue llevado a cabo una entrevista seme estructurada, que a su vez se analizó cualitativamente. Los objetivos de este estudio fueron: lista de las principales actividades desarrolladas en los niños de las escuelas de natación en el municipio de Guarapuava/PR e identificar si los maestros usan actividades lúdicas y si contribuyen en la adaptación al medio líquido en el momento de iniciación en la natación. La opción de buscar en la influencia de recreación y lúdico en la enseñanza de natación infantil está dada por el hecho de que es un tema relevante y poco explorado en la región donde la búsqueda se activa. Los principales resultados obtenidos es que los maestros hacen uso de lo lúdico, utilizando varios recursos para este y matices importantes sobre el tema, si se desarrollan en medio de discursos. Sobre la base de los datos recogidos y analizados, se puede concluir que la ludicidade es importante y es hasta maestro de natación infantil, como mediador del proceso pedagógico utilizando facilitador de aprendizaje lúdico del componente como un instrumento.

PALABRAS CLAVE: natación infantil; metodología de la enseñanza; lo lúdico.

ASPECTOS METODOLÓGICOS NA NATAÇÃO INFANTIL COM ÊNFASE NA LUDICIDADE

RESUMO

O presente estudo tem por propósito desvelar as metodologias utilizadas na natação infantil em três escolas de natação do município de Guarapuava/PR. Foram realizadas visitas às escolas de natação onde foram observadas duas aulas de natação infantil de cada um dos professores nela atuantes, com os quais também foi realizada uma entrevista semiestruturada que por sua vez, foi analisada qualitativamente. Os objetivos deste estudo foram: elencar as principais atividades desenvolvidas nas escolas de natação infantil do município de Guarapuava/PR e identificar se os docentes utilizam atividades lúdicas e se elas contribuem na adaptação ao meio líquido no período da iniciação na natação. A opção em pesquisar sobre a influência da recreação e do lúdico no ensino da natação infantil se dá pelo fato de que é um tema pertinente e pouco explorado na região em que a pesquisa se desencadeia. Como principais resultados obtidos destaca-se que os professores fazem uso do lúdico, que utilizam diversos recursos para isso e importantes nuances sobre o tema se desvelam por entre os discursos. Com base nos dados coletados e analisados, pode-se concluir que a ludicidade é importante e cabe ao professor de natação infantil, enquanto mediador do processo pedagógico utilizar o componente lúdico como instrumento facilitador da aprendizagem.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: natação infantil; metodologia de ensino; ludicidade.