145 - RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS: UNDERSTANDING THE BODY MOVEMENT

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We are pursuing the challenge to teach Rhythmic Gymnastics (RG), aiming to get our students at the Clube Escolar da Secretaria de Educação do Município do Rio de Janeiro (School Club of the Education Secretariat of Rio de Janeiro City) to understand the meanings of their motor actions at the RG practice. According to Freire (1996, p.48), the child, who understands "may get free from the ties of the specific situation in which the learning has taken place and freely use this knowledge according to his/her decisions".

This challenge to make the children understand what they are experiencing in the motor approach confronts us with a RG practice that aims at: a) a working methodology which describes the way through which the child interacts with the modality materials and with the schoolmates; b) the capacity to elaborate and perform tasks, as well as to combine the body movements with the elements of the manual apparatus in a choreography; c) and the reflection on the performed task.

Initially, the RG is one of the privileged sports because it has motor skills really close to the body culture found in children's games and plays. As examples we have the rope jumping, rolling and throwing a ball in game, doing hoop rotations around some part of the body, running races, and the regional dance steps (folklore). All of these movements favor children as old as five years possibilities of motor experiences in RG without the premature initiation into the modality.

Also, we cannot forget the principle of selection of the multiple information of the environment. It is mainly during the first contacts of the children with the apparatus that we have to encourage them with different situations, so that they use and feel them as to consider them a part of their own body. For De Marco (1998) at the moment the nervous system enables the choice and the selection of one or more stimuli, our capacity of learning and integrating with the mean is considerably enlarged, constituting a determinant process on the motor development.

Another fact to be considered is the body availability mediated by the awareness. Awareness in learning is the skill to weight up the sensorial information, to respond to them by means of thoughts or critical actions, and to retain memory traces so as to be able to use these traces and past actions in the future. (LÚRIA,1991,p.191)

Another concern refers to the choice of the teaching and assessment methodologies aiming to achieve a student-centered teaching, in which the teacher plays the learning facilitator part. At this stage, we have decided the way we are going to follow to achieve the greatest goal in children's education, which is to promote the development on an integrated way with the environment where they interact, enabling the discovery, the maintenance or the changing of their cognitive, motor, moral and social-affective properties, either in mathematics, arts, physical education and sports. (BRONFENBRENNER, 1996).

Teacher's decisions on what to teach, when to teach and how to teach are based firstly on the appropriateness of the activity to the individual and not on the appropriateness of the activity to a certain age group. (GALLAHUE,1996). We must keep alert to deal with issues such as the individuality, the mistakes, the motivations, readiness and the questionings of our students, as well as to promote a co-participation in the planning when selecting the teaching style/methodology and the assessment procedures in accordance with the objectives and contents of the learning of specific motor skill. Such procedure might, who knows, establish a profile of the teaching-learning process, on which the student seems creative and autonomous to worry about wider social relations issues that go beyond the simple motor act.

Therefore, we must adopt the following principles to select the teaching and assessment procedures: the variety of information; the learning pace; and the interrelation of motor / cognitive / social-affective actions.

This make us believe that the teaching procedures can not be effective to everyone, and that there is no unique formula for the retention of information and stimuli in the motor skill learning process. For this reason, it is the Physical Education professionals' responsibility to watch out for the differences existing between their students in order to minimize the learning difficulties that appear.

Therefore, this is the pedagogic proposal that has been adopted. It gathers such above-mentioned principles, has as first aims to implement the following children's actions: to execute a composition, elaborated by the own group, of the group exercise with an apparatus of free choice (ball / rope / ribbon); to elaborate a composition of the group exercise with the apparatus of free choice, starting from the indicators established by the teacher/student; to cooperate and collaborate, by interacting with friends, in the elaboration of the composition of the group exercise.

So, the classes are presented in three moments: the *1st moment* is designed to the introduction of the subject of the class and the intended actions. As an initial activity, they are proposed to execute body elements, explore different ways of handling the apparatus rope / ball / and ribbon (perceptive skills), as well as learn about the education of the posture and of the movement (physical skills).

In the 2nd moment, the execution of the body elements and apparatus (rope, ball and ribbon) elements of the are performed in an isolated way and combined to each other. And in the *3rd moment*, whose characteristics are the synthesis and the assessment of the class, the combinations of the body elements with the elements of the apparatus chosen by the group are performed in the elaboration of small associations and/or group exercises. At this stage of the class, we develop the activities/tasks - that have the problematization as principle - where its indicators are established between teacher and students, so that the actions established in the beginning of the class can be observed.

In fact, the moment of the activity/task is the key point of the entire pedagogic proposal. Starting from it, the teacher waits for multiple answers to a single question. This occasion aims to make it easier for the students to reach a level of affective safety as they surpass the conventional answers, as well as to experience skills so to verify solutions and to organize them for specific goals in agreement with their motor capacity. Such procedure favors the discovery of the student's cognitive capacity in the perception of multiple solutions. (MOSTON, 1986)

During the solutions of the activities/tasks, we observed the motor, cognitive and affective-social actions of the students through the observation files. For the motor and cognitive actions we elaborated a single file that enables the access of the two aspects in the same record.

The file is used by each group, and, in the cognitive action, we observed the way how the indicators are chosen and presented by the group, whereas in the motor action, we identified the execution of the movements individually, classifying them as executed with no difficulty (ND) and executed with difficulty (WD).

Those motor skills are experienced, observed and analyzed by the students, who try to identify, in the execution of such skills, their degree of difficulty to accomplish them during the activities/tasks they are offered at the third moment of the class. This procedure provides to the children and to the teacher the construction of indicators usable in the observation file of the motor and cognitive actions.

We have noticed that during the children's participation in the decision making on the choice of the criteria of execution of the elements between with no difficulty (ND) and with difficulty (WD), other behaviors are generated such as: a) they choose elements to be executed in the choreography that all in the group can accomplish; b) they use the self-assessment in a spontaneous way aiming to establish the execution indicators: ND and WD; c) they establish more complex cognitive actions than the identification and memorization of the elements, such as: c.1) they understand the meaning of the norms of execution of the elements of RG; c.2) they apply the principles of the space domain to vary the execution of the body elements and the handling of

the apparatus; c.3) they analyze which body elements and which apparatus elements are the most appropriate to use in combination, for there is a constant relationship between cause and effect during the elaborations of these compositions; c.4) they organize all the combinations of the body elements with the elements of the apparatus in a choreography, determining the synthesis of the proposed task.

As for the observation file regarding the affective-social actions, it is elaborated for each activity/task, containing two categories: a) interaction - divided into: cooperates in the interaction, and hinders the interaction; and b) the category of *productivity* - divided into disposition for the accomplishment of the task, refusal to accomplish the tasks, contribution for the development of the content, and no-contribution for the development of the content. In each category, we have indicators that determine the positive and negative assessments, aiming to make the frequency of negative behaviors equal to zero (0) and to increase the occurrence of positive behaviors during the teaching-learning process.

Such actions are determined by inter and intra personal aspects present in all the activities of the teaching-learning process. They become fundamental pieces for us to be able to mix with the group.

This way, we considered the activity/task that has been performing the role of synthesis of the contents experienced and learned in the RG classes, also to observe and to develop the affective-social behaviors among the students, as indicators for the psychological growth, as well as to understand the meaning of the activity/task.

Bronfenbrenner (1996, p. 47) leads us to the interpersonal structures as the context of the human development, starting from the relationships between the individuals in the activities in a certain atmosphere, accomplished in group or not. In those relationships, called “ecological transitions”, we verify the presence of the roles reversals in which we can alter our feelings, emotions, motivations, intentions and to foment the psychological growth.

According to Gardner (1995, p. 27) “the interpersonal aspect is based on a nuclear capacity of perceiving distinctions among the other ones; especially, contrasts in their spirits, tempers, motivations and intentions”, seeking for the understanding of the other for us to work with them.

The intrapersonal aspect concerns a person's internal state, in other words, “the access to the feeling of one's own life, to the range of the one's own emotions, to the capacity to discriminate those emotions and occasionally label and use them as a way to understand and to guide one's own behavior.” (GARDNER, 1995, p. 28.)

The individual's affective-social behavior is strongly linked to the condition of knowing oneself and the other ones, influenced by the systems of symbols of the culture of the components of the social group.

This personal knowledge can be divided into several stages. At each stage it is possible to identify characteristics that are important for the development of one's personal sphere and to improve one's well being or one's relationship with the group.

For a group to develop and to reach a condition in which the external task is accomplished and the interpersonal problems resolved, it is necessary that the students build a cooperative group, whose members are determined to accomplish the objectives established by it and to solve the activities/tasks. The cooperation is a social behavior that results in the social acceptance and in the attainment of the objectives of the group.

We believe that the understanding of the social interaction established during the RG teaching-learning process can help the children to accomplish better tasks, as well as to make new friends and to influence, positively, the people, and also to show the group how to understand the other ones and how to aid the ones that need.

The second part of the observation file regarding the affective-social actions is composed of questions which aim to verify how the children feel when accomplishing the task, when working with the apparatus in the activity and when accomplishing the activity in group. Five types of facial expressions “little faces” are used to determine the degree of joy when performing the activity, as: happy, sad, surprise, rage, concerned (Figure 1). It is worth to point out that the students take part, in the decision process, of the five types and colors of such expressions that determine joy, in other words, for certain groups these “little faces” may not be the same ones.

Figure 1: File of joy degree when performing the activity: happy, sad, surprised, raged concerned (ALONSO,2000)



The procedure of verifying the state of joy by means of the “little faces” has been providing the teachers with explanations about the manifested behaviors, as, for instance, a student that showed “sad when working with the ball.” This state of sadness was due to the student having difficulty in working with the ball apparatus with the non-dominant hand. Therefore the student considered '”the ball apparatus annoying.”

This second part of the file of observation of the affective-social actions helps in the teaching-learning process to identify whether the activities/tasks are of “molar” nature or not. “Molar” activity is the one that, according to Bronfenbrenner (1996), is characterized when the child shows interest for the activity, giving continuity to its execution for a long period. It is very satisfying when we manage to change an “annoying” activity/task into a pleasant, interesting and meaningful one, causing the child to remain in the performance of the activity until it is joyfully completed.

In this pedagogic practice, we verified the possibility of the RG learning where the motor action is not limited only to the automation of the elements. We aim to achieve the understanding of this action on a creative and autonomous motor perspective, interacting with issues related to the feelings and to the present social relationships in the group and with the group, going beyond the simple automated motor act.

What we are trying develop is the possibility that, in the adult phase, these children have a personal knowledge that will allow them to read the intentions and desires (even when they are occult) of many other individuals and, partially, act based on this knowledge so that they can develop their social, cognitive and motor functions in a conscious and constructive way.

We point out the activity/task structure, with the double purpose of teaching procedure and evaluation procedure. In other words, starting from the activities/tasks we have built the assessment material for the pedagogic proposal of RG which enables the integrated observation of the motor, cognitive and affective-social actions, where data obtained through such observations, during the their accomplishment, serve as orientation for the decisions making in the teaching-learning process. And what we could verify is that the activity/task is being the guiding axis of the whole pedagogical proposal of RG.

By now we will identify some aspects of the activity/task while pedagogic intervention: a) the activity/task favors the students' understanding on which body elements are the most appropriate to combine with the nature of the elements of the apparatus. This happens when they notice that certain body elements compromise the quality of the apparatus handling, for example: rhythmic bounces of the ball during the turn of the body; b) the understanding and the appropriate use of the RG terminology is manifested during the exhibition of the children's ideas, in the intention of collaborating with the content for the task

accomplishment. This attitude enables the teacher to identify the knowledge degree on the subject; c) it favors the self-assessment, since the children verifies their limitation in the motor, cognitive and affective-social aspects during the accomplishment of the task; d) the interest in elaborating the associations and group exercises (activities/tasks) makes the group often look for new skills, enabling the creative process in RG; e) the use of the activity/task as an assessment means of the motor, cognitive and affective-social actions provides a formative assessment that demands cooperation, free from standard tests that only seek the selection and the determination of stereotypes of the motor gesture in RG; f) the activity/task provides the group formation, what is the stage for the children's psychological growth, as its members solve the interpersonal conflicts aiming at the cohesion of the group and the conclusion of the task.

We have just exposed to what extent the activity/task, which has the principle of the problematization of the teaching, is being established as the pedagogic guideline of this proposal. For Kunz (1991, p. 192), "the problematization may foment a permanent process of creation and discovery", starting from the searches for solutions, when the student "experience the acting of independent form, the cooperation and the communication with the group and with the teacher", enabling "a knowledge, experiences and knowledge of greater relevance for his emancipation."

We have observed facts in this teaching-learning process in which the students discuss on the chains of decisions, present solutions for the difficulties in the learning of the motor skill, and feel pleasure in presenting the choreographies accomplished by them and in helping their friends.

We have been teaching RG without spoiling the modality characteristics; we are preserving its specific materials, its skills and modalities of competitions. We agree with Freire (1996, p.43), when he states that the teaching of a sporting modality implicates "necessarily to teach the techniques of the sport socially recognized and constituted in accordance to the social configuration that constitutes the sport."

Therefore, we intended to continue preserving the RG as a precious asset and we want the movement to have an internalized rhythm, in other words, a mental representation that seems to us to constitute an essential requirement for the technical learning to maintain a motor action permeated by symbols and meanings of its body movement.

It is good to observe along the teaching-learning process when the children demonstrate they are happy, sad, concerned, surprised, supportive; but, above all, understanding the motor actions, without fear of being penalized for their mistakes, and being autonomous and creative, in their decisions during this process, and free to choose their "multiple possibilities" of RG practice.

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RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS: UNDERSTANDING THE BODY MOVEMENT

ABSTRACT: This paper describes de data found in the research on a methodological proposal to the teaching of Rhythmic Gymnastics (RG) at the School Club of the Education Secretariat of Rio de Janeiro County. That proposal aims to stimulate the knowledge building on a motor, creative and autonomous approach, which deals with feelings, emotions and social relationship issues present in the group (and with it), starting from the problematization of its teaching.

Key words: Teaching Methodology; School Physical Education; Rhythmic Gymnastics

GYMNASTIQUE RYTHMIQUE: COMPRÉHENSION DU MOUVEMENT CORPOREL

RÉSUMÉ :

Cet article décrit les données trouvées dans l'étude sur une proposition méthodologique pour l'enseignement de la Gymnastique Rythmique (GR) dans le Club Scolaire du Secrétariat Municipal de l'Éducation de la Ville de Rio de Janeiro, où il a l'intention de stimuler la construction de la connaissance dans une perspective motrice, créative et autonome, ayant affaire avec les questions des sentiments, des émotions et des relations sociales présentes dans (et avec) le proupe, partant de la problematisation de l'enseignement de la même. Mots-clés : Méthodologie de l'Enseignement ; Éducation Physique Scolaire ; Gymnastique Rythmique

GIMNASIA RÍTMICA: COMPRENDIENDO EL MOVIMIENTO CORPORAL

RESUMEN:

Este artículo describe datos encontrados en la investigación respecto a una propuesta metodológica para la enseñanza de la Gimnasia Rítmica (GR) en el Club Escolar de la Secretaria del Municipio de Río de Janeiro, donde intenta conseguir estimular la construcción del conocimiento a través de una perspectiva motora, creativa y autónoma, que trata de las cuestiones de los sentimientos, emociones y de las relaciones sociales presentes en (y con) el grupo, partiendo de la problematización de la enseñanza de la misma. Palabras-llave: Metodología de la Enseñanza, Educación Física Escolar, Gimnasia Rítmica.

GINÁSTICA RÍTMICA: COMPREENDENDO O MOVIMENTO CORPORAL

RESUMO: Este artigo descreve os dados encontrados na pesquisa sobre uma proposta metodológica para o ensino da Ginástica Rítmica (GR) no Clube Escolar da Secretaria de Educação do Município do Rio de Janeiro.Tal proposta visa estimular a construção do conhecimento numa perspectiva motora, criativa e autônoma, que lida com as questões dos sentimentos, emoções e das relações sociais presentes no (e com o) grupo, a partir da problematização do ensino da mesma.

Palavras-chaves: Metodologia do Ensino; Educação Física Escolar; Ginástica Rítmica.