91 - QUESTIONING THE BODY AT SCHOOL: REFLECTIONS ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY

ANNA CAROLINA PESSÔA DA CONCEIÇÃO;
DILERMANDO MORAES COSTA;
IONE DA SILVA CORREA;
JACIANE BARCELOS RIBEIRO DO NASCIMENTO;
JUREMA ROSA LOPES
Universidade do Grande Rio- UNIGRANRIO, Duque de Caxias/Rio de Janeiro/Brasil
jlopes@unigranrio.edu.br

doi:10.16887/86.a1.91

Introduction

The body, in the school enviromnent, constitutes one of the fundamental concerns of all physical education professionals, as well as of other educators at school, regarding human nature. This year's congress inspires us to discuss the obese children's body at school. As it cannot be thoroughly approached in this paper, we believe that reflection focused on the conceptual nucleus "body" and "obesity", is generally little presented in the daily discussions of professionals within the schools. These concepts are rarely included in teacher training processes for children's education and early years of elementary school.

In the first part of this paper, we discuss the body conception present in the school environment, heritage of what is called "cartesian model", anchored in the principles of "disjunction", "reduction" and "abstraction", which prevails in the organization of time and space at school. We also mention in our reflections the fragmentation of the body which, in the media aimed at different age groups, respond to several market interests.

Secondly, we consider obese body at school from the concept of obesity from the teachers' point of view and its consequences in the learning process.

In the final considerations, we highlight the need of strengthening school-family partnership as a way to discuss educational practices in order to encourage reflection on the body, obesity and other relevant issues under debate in society, often missing within the school environment.

1. (Re) Thinking the body definition at school

> The idea of human body being seen as animal, nature and culture, subject and object, visible and invisible, inaccurate, polysemic and unfinished, possessor of silence zones (...) makes one believe that the complex human condition involves the awereness that the body produces individual and collective knowledge. However, it is essential to understand the human body subject in its meanders, along the secrets it hides, including unthought and unadvised matters. At the same time it reveals itself, the human body is able to hide. (LUCENA, 2007).

There have been currently some discussions on the identity of the body from cultural and social perspectives. The body is seen as a starting point for personal development, and as such, it constitutes the existence of humans filled with values and principles from each society. Rethinking the definition of body at school leads us to (re) think the predominant school environment knowledge, derived from the so- called "cartesian model", anchored in the principles: "disjunction", "reduction" and "abstraction".

This definition, according to Elias (1994), characterizes the passage from a conception of human beings and the world that was rooted in the religion, to secular conceptions that were sensitive at the time of Descartes, associated with the saying "I think, therefore I am". Elias adds that from Descartes, we come to the core of this form of self-consciousness, and, therefore, the knowledge of physical objects, including their own body, all dubious and illusory.

The doubt and illusion imposed a greater necessity to observe, both physical objects and humans, before acting. Observing and thinking constituted a substance in the habit of thought and of discourse, which were presented as different objects: "body" and "mind", hence the principle of disjunction in the various courses studied and in the organization of time and space, prevalent at schools.

This organization of time and space is revealed through the school time devoted to "mind" or to learning the contents of the various courses, when the body control is required in the classroom. The other time is dedicated to "body", outside the classroom in the recreation time and physical activities in general, including physical education classes and intervals, which represent body movement and action.

Consistent with the principle of "disjunction", the principle of "reduction" removes from the center the complexity of knowledge to a simpler understanding, which means to fragment knowledge (as courses) so that we can, later, have the view of the whole at the end of a given period.

Another point to be considered regarding the principle of reduction is the simplified explanation of complex situations, such as: health issues of various nature, are not always known, which as a result generate difficulties in learning disabilities, behavioral disorders, which affect relations in the school environment, among other problems. Generally, these complex situations, reduced only to factors present in that environment, work briefly, soothing educators' anguish and anxiety; however, distorting the situation by minimizing the depth, severity and complexity of the nature of the problems.

As for the principle of abstraction, Elias (1994) highlights that the development of the individual does not occur in abstraction. This is part of a substrate in which the "identity-self" is based on the entire organism. This ability to perceive oneself while body organization has enabled people to keep distance from themselves, and to observe and reflect upon themselves. Still, according to Elias, the individual's linguistic signs are formed so as to realize themselves as someone distant from their own self.

> Thus, the individual talks about themselves, as the object of their observation, through terms like "my body", whereas, towards oneself, once they are able to watch from a distance, they use terms such as ' me ', ' my soul ' or ' my mind '. (...) The simple use of the expression ' my body ' makes it sound like I am a person who exists outside of my body and now has got a body, more or less the way some clothes may be acquired. (ELIAS, 1994, p. 154-155).

The same author adds that the ambiguity of the expression ' my body ' derives from the fact that the term "body" can

refer both to the examples of inanimate matter, regarding the biological unit of more complex organisms. In this sense, the human body is handled abstractly. As an example, Lopes (2010), while referring to the debate about sexuality in school, highlights that the bodies are often disregarded as sources of pleasure, as if they did not exist as constitutive forces of whom people are in social practices; "the body at the school was erased so that it could pass unnoticed or be ignored since it is the mind or cognition that matters" (LOPES, 2011, p. 126).

In this regard, Elias (1994) highlights that when one talks about human body, we often ignore the fact that the head is part of a person's body. This way of understanding the body de-characterizes the nature of human identity. The face, specific of a person, despite the time, shows with clarity its identity from childhood to old age.

The cultural influences and technological advancement, throughout the 20th century, enabled new reflections on the body, which gained evidence, mainly through the marketing of products and lifestyles. The stimulus to a body related to physical beauty, developed the idea of self accomplishment. In this perspective, in many ways, the body has been reduced to the condition of use and merchandise.

In relation to children, exposed to some high load of suggestive information, the media has a prominent role in determining the patterns of consumption, generated by aggressive advertisements in general and trade and food industries in particular, which stimulate the consumption of foods with a high caloric value, represented by large amounts of fat, sugar and salt. These colorful, tasty food and even in some cases, accompanied by toys as giveaways, represent an appeal to children's delight by the attraction that they exert. The cultivation of the habit of consuming these foods in an exaggerated manner, we assume contribute to the increase in childhood obesity.

However, bearing in mind young people, adults and elderly, Santaella (2008) highlights the media as a means of dissemination and capitalisation of the cult of the body, consolidating behavior trends. The beauty industry influences the attitudes of people, causing them to seek this beauty at any cost. All the news related to the body resulting from the fascination of society in pursuit of the news and trends concerning the practice of physical activity, diets, the plastic surgery, the use of products and cosmetics that promise an ideal body.

The body, rooted in the subject, became a multiple conection of concerns and investment, became a product marketed in many ways. Today, such trade starts, prematurely, in the body formation in the womb, passes by the body of the obese child, "athlectic" youngsters and adults, in addition to offered products translated as benefits in functional improvement and the quality of life of the elderly.

2. The obese children's body at school

The implications arising from the fragmented way of thinking reflect upon the way by which teachers and other educators address complex situations experienced at schools, which sometimes are interpreted in a simplified form. For example, nowadays, when we think about obese children's body, we attribute this situation to digital technologies which maintain the body, for hours, in front of a screen; as a result, the only body parts that move are the eyes and the fingers. Would that be the only cause of obesity? How could teachers-educators contribute, at school, in addressing this complex situation? What is obesity?

In the research conducted by Conceição, Corrêa and Nascimento (2014), teachers in training defined obesity "as a term used for describing people who are considerably above the ideal weight". The expression "overweight" is used in reference to an ideal model of the body determined culturally as well as a body model aired in the media, through the marketing of products related to physical perfection and lifestyles, required by the standards of a certain social class.

In the same research, the teachers conceptualized obesity as "act of becoming addicted to certain foods that increase physical and body structure", "act of eating too much", "excessive and unregulated food consumption". The "addiction to certain foods" to the point of causing increased physical structure refers to advertisements aimed at children, when through the media, generated by aggressive advertising of food industries, stimulate the consumption of high-calorie foods, great amount of fat, sugar and salt. In some schools, mostly private ones, where the canteens also become a source of income, which teems with a variety of goodies.

Can we reduce obesity only to food intake, though? Marcondes et al (2003) define obesity as a clinical condition characterized by excessive accumulation of fat in the body, causing harm to health. It is considered as a multicausal illness, and Mello, Meyer and Luft (2004) add that external and internal factors influence the eating behavior. Among the external factors, the aforementioned authors cite: the family unit, the attitudes towards parents and friends and the social and cultural values. In relation to internal factors, they highlight the needs and psychological characteristics, body image, values and personal experiences, food preferences, health-related aspects, among others.

In relation to external factors, Pierine (2006) has drawn up a research, whose aim was to relate the level of physical activity; the quality of school snack and body composition of children and young people. In this research, it was found out low nutritional quality in the school snack, with reduced amount of fiber, calcium and iron and also high amounts of carbohydrates, lipids and sodium. We believe, as mentioned earlier, perhaps owing to the influence of the media, the food consumed mostly by students was the sugar.

The results showed that 33% of the participants of the survey were overweight, 60% are physically inactive and 58% have large amount of abdominal fat. Based on those results, we believe that the school performs a key role towards the prevention of obesity, especially in the age group that covers children from 03 to 11 years old. As Barbosa (2004) adds: in the school context, children have ingested too many high energy density foods like soft drinks, ice cream, sweets and savouries.

In the research conducted by Conceição, Corrêa and Nascimento (2014), the obese child was characterized as: lonely, distracted, shy, stubborn, sad and discouraged. The manifestation of these behaviors leads us to reflect on the difficulties faced by obese children as they deal with themselves and before their self-image. As a result, there is a distancing from the outside world that may cause negative reflections on school learning.

According to the same authors, it is also mentioned, with little emphasis: the intelligent, polite and humorous behavior characteristics of obese children in the school environment. These behaviors help us to think about a possible effort that obese children make in order to accept themselves, even though their awareness regarding the obese body. Therefore, they seek for approval from others, often in an attempt to overcome disrespectful attitudes from colleagues, such as jokes and derogatory nicknames which affect their interaction with the group at school.

3. Final considerations

Although the reflection upon the obese body at school is relevant, we are certain that it does not end with this paper because the conceptual nucleus "body" and "obesity" rarely appear in the daily discussions of the professionals within the schools, as a result of the process of teacher formation for children's education and early years of elementary school.

Considering our observations, we highlight relevant strengthening school-family partnership as a way of thinking about alternatives to reduce the consequences of obesity in the learning process.

In this sense, we can suggest the most incisive participation of parents or legal guardians concerning the choices of food being offered to the child, for consumption as snack at school; besides, parents should know about the educational proposal of the school about this and other topics, present in the social debate.

.It is advisable that teachers encourage healthy eating preferences on the menu of the children who eat irregularly. This is possible if we consider that children do at least a daily meal at school. In this sense, the professionals at school can stimulate, through their educational practices, the development of children as subjects of promotion of eating habits and healthy lifestyles.

References

CONCEIÇÃO, A.C.P.da; CORRÊA, I.da S. NASCIMENTO, J.B.R. do. Obesidade: o olhar dos estudantes de Pedagogia. TCC, Duque de Caxias, RJ, UNIGRANRIO, 2015.

ELIAS, N. A sociedade dos Indivíduos. Tradução, Vera Ribeiro. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar Ed. 1994

LOPES, L.P.M. Sexualidades em sala de aula: discurso, desejo e teoria queer. In:Multiculturalismo: diferenças culturais e práticas pedagógicas/ Antônio Flávio Moreira, Vera Maria Candau (orgs.)Petrópolis,RJ:Vozes,2010

LUCENA, R.de F. Norbert Elias: corpo, educação e processos civilizadores. In: Anais- X Simpósio Internacional. Processo Civilizador. Campinas/SP, 2007

SANTAELA, L. Corpo e comunicação: sintoma da cultura. São Paulo: Paulus, 2004.

PIERINE, D.T. et al. Composição corporal, atividade física e consumo alimentar de alunos do ensino fundamental e médio. Motriz 2006. Jan.13-2014.

Rua Gilberto Freire, 301, Aptº703.
Barra da Tijuca-Rio de Janeiro-Brasil

QUESTIONING THE BODY AT SCHOOL: REFLECTIONS ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY

ABSTRACT

The body, in the school enviromnent, constitutes one of the fundamental concerns of all physical education professionals, as well as of other educators at school, regarding human nature. This year's congress inspires us to discuss the obese children's body at school. As it cannot be thoroughly approached in this paper, we believe that reflection focused on the conceptual nucleus "body" and "obesity", generally, is little presented in the daily discussions of these professionals within the schools. These concepts are rarely included in teacher training processes for children's education and early years of elementary school.We discuss the body conception present in the school environment, derived from the so- called "Cartesian model", anchored in the principles of "disjunction", "reduction" and "abstraction", which prevail in the organization of time and space at school. We also mention in our reflections the fragmentation of the body which, in the media aimed at different age groups, respond to several market interests.Finally, we aim at discussiong the definition of obesity and its consequences in the learning process. We state that it is crucial to strengthen the school-family partnership in order to stimulate new educational practices aiming at promoting and extending the reflection on body, obesity and other topics under discussion in society, often missing within the school.

KEYWORDS: Body. Children obesity. School

QUESTIONNER CORPS À L'ÉCOLE: RÉFLEXIONS SUR L'OBÉSITÉ INFANTILE

RÉSUMÉ

Le corps, à l'école, est l'une des principales préoccupations de tous les professionnels de l'éducation physique, ainsi que les autres enseignants de l'école, quand il traite avec la nature humaine. Le Congrès de cette année nous incite à remettre en question le corps obèse de l'enfant à l'école. Nous croyons qu'une réflexion axée sur le noyau conceptuel «corps» et «obésité» est peu présente chez les professionnels dans les discussions quotidiennes de l'école. Ces concepts, ils ne pas ont aussi présente dans le processus de formation des enseignants des élèves de maternelle et l'enseignemen primaire de la petite enfance. Problématiser la conception de ce corps à l'école, l'héritage de ce qu'on appelle un «modèle cartésien», ancrée dans les principes de la «disjonction», «réduction» et «abstraction», qui prévaut dans l'organisation du temps et l'espace scolaire. Nous avons souligné dans nos réflexions, la fragmentation du corps, dans les différents groupes d'âge, les médias, traité comme une marchandise, satisfaire les différents intérêts du marché. Enfin, nous essayons de penser le corps obèses à l'école, dans la conception des enseignants de l'obésité et leurs conséquences dans le processus d'apprentissage.A souligné, en conclusion, la nécessité de renforcer le partenariat école-famille, afin de discuter de pratiques éducatives afin d'encourager la réflexion sur le corps, l'obésité et d'autres sujets pertinents pour la discussion dans la société, souvent absents dans l'espace scolaire.

MOTS-CLÉS: Corps. Obésité chez les enfants. École.

CUESTIONANDO CUERPO EN LA ESCUELA: REFLEXIONES SOBRE LA OBESIDAD INFANTIL

RESUMEN

El cuerpo, en la escuela, es una de las principales preocupaciones de los profesionales de la Educación Física, así como los otros educadores en la escuela, cuando se trata de la naturaleza humana. El congreso de este año nos inspira a cuestionar el cuerpo obeso niño en la escuela. Por no correr em el presente artículo, creemos que la reflexión se centrado en los núcleos conceptuales "cuerpo" y "obesidad" en general, poco presente en las conversaciones diarias de los profesionales dentro de las escuelas . Estos conceptos también algunos están presentes en el proceso de formación del professorado , dirigido a la enseñanza a los alumnos de Educación Infantil y los primeros años de la enseñanza Clave. Problematizar el diseño de este cuerpo en la escuela , herencia del llamado "modelo cartesiano", anclado en los principios de "disyunción", "reducción" y "abstracción", que prevalece en la organización del tempo y el entorno escolar. Nosotros señalamos en nuestras reflexiones, la fragmentación del cuerpo que, en los medios, en diferentes grupos de edad, como una mercancía cumple diversos intereses de mercado. Por último, se busca cuestionar la concepto de la obesidad y sus consecuencias en el proceso de aprendizajo Señaló, en conclusión, la necesidad de fortalecer la asociación las escuelas y las familias, con el fin de discutir las prácticas educativas con el fin de fomentar la reflexión sobre el cuerpo, la obesidad y otras cuestiones pertinentes em debate en la sociedad, a menudo ausente en el espacio escolar.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Cuerpo. Obesidad infantil.Escuela

PROBLEMATIZANDO O CORPO NA ESCOLA: REFLEXÕES SOBRE A OBESIDADE INFANTIL

RESUMO

O corpo, no espaço escolar, constitui uma das preocupações fundamentais de todos os profissionais da Educação Física, bem como, dos demais educadores na escola, quando se aborda a natureza humana. O Congresso deste ano nos inspira a problematizar o corpo obeso infantil na escola. Por não se esgotar no presente artigo, acreditamos que a reflexão focada nos núcleos conceituais “corpo” e “obesidade”, geralmente, pouco se apresentam nas discussões diárias dos profissionais no interior das escolas. Esses conceitos também pouco estão presentes no processo de formação de professores, destinados à docência junto aos alunos da Educação Infantil e Anos Iniciais do Ensino Fundamental. Problematizamos a concepção de corpo presente na escola, herança do que se chama de “modelo cartesiano”, ancorado nos princípios de “disjunção”, ”redução” e “abstração”, que predomina na organização do tempo e espaço escolar. Pontuamos em nossas reflexões, a fragmentação do corpo que, na mídia, em diferentes faixas etárias, enquanto mercadoria atende a diversos interesses mercadológicos. Finalmente, buscamos problematizar o conceito de obesidade e suas consequências no processo de aprendizagem. Apontamos, como conclusão, a necessidade do fortalecimento da parceria escola-família, como forma de problematizar as práticas educativas, de modo a favorecer a reflexão sobre corpo, obesidade e outros temas relevantes em debate na sociedade, frequentemente ausentes no espaço da escola.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Corpo. Obesidade Infantil. Escola