

GETTING INTO CRITICAL DISCOURSE AND POST-CRITICAL DISCOURSE: PARANÁ SYLLABI IN THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract

In this study, including the concept of power relations of Michel Foucault, two official syllabus documents of Paraná Physical Education produced in the early 21st century were assessed. The first document was produced by the Secretary of the State of Paraná (Brazil) for Education (2007, 2008); the second document, by the Municipality Authorities of Araucária city (Brazil) in 2004. In the conclusion, the text indicated sundry breaks/continuities regarding critical discourse and post-critical discourse for the Paraná syllabus narratives.

Keywords: Physical Education - Syllabus - Post-Critical Discourse

Introduction

In the early 1990s, the syllabus studies entered a new stage. In such historical moment, claims from certain minority groups were stressed for the education theory. If until that time a traditionally critical discourse was accentuated, within that period, then, emerge requirements from other social dynamics, which Silva (2004) calls post-critical discourse. If in the critical syllabus predominated regarding economic determinations, and its attention was for people understand the notion of social class; by contrast, the post-critical theorisation showed that the differences are not restricted to classes. Gender, race, ethnic group, religion and sexuality also become highly important for syllabus Theorisation¹.

1- According to Moreira (1998) two lines of research seems to shape the critical theory of syllabus. The first one goes until 1980s, loyal to the structural approaches and Marxist or neo-Marxist references. The second one is more known within the 1990s, which included the contributions from the cultural, feminist, ethnic, post-modern and post-structural study. Despite agreeing with the author's analysis, as

The critical theory appears inside Brazilian education thought only in the late 1970s, after the beginning of the process to democratise the country. The main references were firstly the popular education of Paulo Freire (1970) and afterwards historic-critical and social-critic pedagogies of contents, according to Saviani and Libâneo (early 1980). In the second half of 1980s, the thoughts of Paulo Freire, Saviani, and Libâneo started to have a new friend. It is the historical moment which created the first contacts with productions affected by UK and USA sociological analysis, which were based on neo-Marxism of Gramsci and Frankfurt School by the reproduction theories and cultural Marxism of Raymond Williams. It is important to mention that terms as reproduction, ideology, hegemony, culture and power become fundamental concepts in such productions. Social class category and labour category stop receiving previous importance and start including a sophisticated analytical matrix composed by other social dynamics, e.g. class, gender and race.

Such dynamics are investigated by using the post-critical syllabus theory. Such productions, as mentioned by Silva (2004), emphasised deconstruction, differences, local narratives, symbol production, popular culture, identities and minority groups. When such matters were acquired, categories were remoulded until today and, thus, some theoretical pragmatism very hard to the critical thought.

All such theorisation was also present within the Brazilian Physical Education (PE). The approximation by using the critical discourse occurred from the sudden, epistemological 'crisis' started in the early 1980s. Before adopting the critical discourse, however, such field provided alternative proposes for the sports model. The structuralist economics created by Go Tani and a fundamental conception for the Educational Psychology (elaborated by João Batista Freire) is important for the approaches of Psychomotoricity of the French Le Boulch. Another teaching approach which marks such transition period would be free lessons submitted by the German Reiner Hildebrandt and Ralf Laging. Although it is considered as a critical teaching methodology,

well as Silva (2004) agrees, I prefer to hold such second current of post-criticism. In this wise, according to Moreira (1998), what is called critical theory has several theoretical models, becoming a wide and plural qualification. In this text, I use as synonym didactically, even knowing that is about something inaccurate, the terms critical theory, historical-critical pedagogy and critical-liberating methodology. I am aware that the first definition is wider than the other two ones.

some of its hypotheses do not agree with the parameters of such theory, in particular not thematising the elements for capitalist dynamics.

The first systematisations for the teaching of PE provided by a critical tradition began to appear only in the 1990s. Among them, it is stressed the critical–liberating methodology, created by the Coletivo de Autores (1992), with an obvious influence from the thoughts of Saviani and Libâneo. Differently, is possible to mention the critical–emancipatory approach, created by Kunz; teaching methodology with aspects of the Frankfurt School, pedagogy of Paulo Freire and phenomenology of Merleu-Ponty.

Only in the second half of 1990s appeared proposals thematising some of the social dynamics suggested by the post-critical speech (ALMEIDA, 2006; NOGUEIRA, 2004). It is emphasised the Plural Physical Education of both Daólio and notion of corporeality of Tabora de Oliveira².

It is reflections which inserted other social elements into the syllabus narrative and that became the pedagogical discussion regarding Brazil PE in 21st century. Several PE theorists (each one, each way) also were affected by such new discourse which goes beyond the contributions from syllabus critical theory, according to Vaz et al. (2002), Neira (2009), Vago (2006) and Darido, and Rangel (2005). Even Bracht, one of the most important theorists of the critical pedagogy, also was influenced directly by such new movement of the Educational Theories³ (BRACHT et al, 2003).

In order to understand better how such matters behave in syllabus proposals, this study aims to assess the clash, power disputes, breaks/continuities (FOUCAULT, 2003) for the elements of critical and post-critical discourse occurred in Paraná PE in the first decade of 21st century. Considering the focus of this study, was selected the Syl-

2-I am not stating that such reflection are calculated during the post-critical reflections. I am stating that the proposals of such intellectuals are marked, ones more others less, by the social dynamics of such syllabus current.

3-I want to declare that although considering highly important the view on the present situation regarding the syllabus theories in the PE, it will not be the aim of such study. I state that because I think if I compare other theorists of the area the paper will become superficial, which become an analysis simple, shallow and linear. This way, this study limits only to Paraná documents and notion of corporeality according to Tabora de Oliveira. An explanation more detailed on such impacts can be found in Almeida (2006) and Nogueira (2004).

labus created by the municipal authorities of Araucária⁴(2004) ; however, it was also necessary to investigate documents produced by the Secretary of Education of the State of Paraná, Brazil (PARANÁ, 2007), since the state-level syllabus was submitted to the same process of rivalry compared to the one of the municipality.

The syllabus impacts of the 1990s: the ‘appearance’ of the critical discourse

The first Paraná document affected by the theorisation from the syllabus critical theory was published in 1990, and was named *Curriculo Básico para a Escola Pública do Estado do Paraná* (Basic Syllabus for State School of the State of Paraná) (PARANÁ, 1990). According to Silva and Navarro (2008), the main part of the document at its beginning refers to the role of the school within capitalist society, regarding Althusserian ideology which says that school institution historically reproduce values and ideologies in a capitalist production way.

Concerning PE, Navarro (2007) stress that once can realise the influence of the reflection from the area 'crisis', since the Basic Syllabus consists of a study ‘reflection’ of progressive movement authors for

4-The municipality of Araucária is located at the metropolitan region of Curitiba, roughly 30 km far from the capital of the State of Paraná. Its population nowadays is roughly 105 000 habitants including a yearly growth rate of 5.26 %. Regarding the education, the municipality has 40 schools for Primary School, considering 23 schools from the beginning to the 4th grade; 17 from the beginning to the 8th grade. It also has 26 Centros Municipais de Educação Infantil—CMEIs (Municipal Centres for Child Education), employing, in its own staff, more than 1,200 educators. In 2004, the city introduced a Municipal System for Education (Law No 1528, 02 December) and its Municipal Council for Education Law No 1527, 02 November). The Municipal System for Education meets levels for Child Education (0–6 y.o.), including crèche, maternity hospital, kindergarten, the whole Primary School, besides also of the types of Education for Youths and Adults (EJA) and Special Education. Regarding PE, the city provides for teachers with Degree only for the Education from 5th to 8th grade, roughly 30 professionals. In the early years of the Primary School, the lessons are performed by teachers in different systems (RMDs), which they receive from the PE coordination, a process of continued education similar to the one received by teachers from the final grades. (ARAUCÁRIA, 2004; ASTORFI JÚNIOR et. al. 2007).

PE in Brazil. Texts of Vitor Marinho de Oliveira, João Paulo Medina, Lino Castellani Filho, Paulo Ghiraldelli Júnior, Apolônio Abadio do Carmo, and Valter Bracht was mentioned. As Moraes and Silva and Navarro (2008) mentioned, however, the syllabus critical theory was not the only discursive alternative in the document. Among the several discursive repertoire processed, besides the critic one, it was possible see elements of the Human Movement Science, proposed by the Portuguese Manuel Sérgio, as well as the elements of Educational Psychology, Psychomotoricity and Developmentalism.

Considering the parts which deal with the movement hypothesis, the syllabus shows an aspect near to the developmentalism, Educational Psychology and Psychomotoricity, since it presents the fundamental skills to be developed during lessons, which are classified as: a) motor behaviour of base (sitting, standing up, rolling, walking, etc); b) neuromotor behaviour (spinning, running, leaping, jumping, etc); c) body schema (posture, balance, fine motor skills, laterality, etc). According to Moraes and Silva and Navarro (2008), the lessons were divided considering the development level for maturation, i.e. the contents are classified by the properties of the several age brackets. Dividing the contents, in addition, the syllabus considers the concept of age bracket. For the pre-school, teaching of basic literacy, and 3rd and 4th grades, the document establishes the contents for gymnastic, dance and games. The authors stress that such matters are related in a progressive way and always considering the concept of biology and maturation, focusing on dealing with the students' development 'rightly'. According to the authors, such traits is even obvious when appear on the document the affirmation saying that the Sport must be worked only from the 5th grade on, as well as the matters regarding the historical, social and cultural aspects for movement. One can observe that even to criticise society, the education continues tied to the knowledge from the biology.

All such discussion on the Basic Syllabus also had its echo in Araucária, since the discourse on critical pedagogy was, in the later 1980s, the main legal base for an education and progressive project. The discussions to create the Syllabus Planning of the municipality began in 1991 and after several meetings was organised the first part of the proposal in 1992 (ARAUCÁRIA, 1992). The second part was published in 1993 (ARAUCÁRIA, 1993). Similarly to the Basic Syllabus, in the Syllabus Planning, again was seen the use of the reflec-

tion of Saviani and Libâneo. Such fact shows how the municipality discourse was linked to the state document reason, including all the Brazilian discourse.

The historical-critic discourse was not the only theoretical alternative in the proposal for the municipality PE. Other discursive matters within the epistemological concepts of the PE also wanted a space in the syllabus. Despite the discursive impacts, the Syllabus Planning of Araucária presented a lower epistemological contradiction than the Basic Syllabus, which revealed a version nearer the elements suggested by Saviani (1984; 1991) and by Coletivo de Autores (1992).

If in such first documents the impacts are marked by the fight between the critical discourse and the documents from Educational Psychology, Psychomotoricity, Developmentalism, and Human Movement Science, in the early 21st century the syllabus rivalries are seen differently within Parana scenario.

The appearance of new rhetoric for Paraná Physical Education

The main subject for the critical-liberating methodology in Paraná is known as Marcus Aurélio Tabora de Oliveira, professor of the Department of Education of the Federal University of Paraná. Theorist that since 1998 wanted to break the critical pedagogy present in the Coletivo de Autores (1992) and in composition of Bracht (1992). According to Tabora de Oliveira (2003), such productions try to make an agreement between the school and numberless classifications already mentioned a priori. Analysis considered simple and general consider the school as a product direct from a class society forgetting that the school institution is a contradictory space, in which there is reproduction but also singular practice production from its agents' experience.

In particular to provide points regarding the school subjects' experience, the author adopted a concept of a school culture of Juliá and Vinao Frago. Also, the notion of experience used by remarkable theorists of English tradition as Edward Thompson, Raymond Williams and Ivor Goodson⁵.

The own Tabora de Oliveira, in an interview granted to Navarro

5-It is important to say that pedagogical reflections performed by the author are also based on the emancipatory project of Frankfurt School, in particular regarding the reflections of Herbert Marcuse, Max Horkheimer, and Theodor W. Adorno.

(2007, p. 100), said that his notion of corporeality⁶ is an attempt to break the paradigm of the body culture:

[...] the corporeality proposes a discussion that somehow exceed the conception of body culture [...] you take a look to all these books of Physical Education, even they talk about body culture and body culture of movement, there is still an driving emphasis, even though historic, but driving. The idea of corporeality says: listen, driving is part of what we are. We are bodily movement, but we are a lot more than movement. This is perhaps the distinction. That is why Tarcísio Mauro Vago states: but both of such things are not incompatible. I do not think either that they are incompatible, but they are not synonyms as well. And for me remaining in the perspective of the body culture seems a reductionism. I already wrote it in different texts. Just as remaining in the perspective of the motor education. I reckon that is a lot more than that [...]. The idea of corporeality is a lot more than movement.

The speech indicates that such proposals calculated in the movement do not consider the experiences of each subject and the subjectivity in the subjects' body. The author accentuate that is necessary to look at other marks of culture. In this wise, Taborda de Oliveira (1998; 2003) exhibits that school and the PE school should worry with different social problems culturally. Among such elements, there are dynamics as violence; prejudice involving ethnic group and class; prostitution; child labour; drug traffic; body rules imposed by the means of mass communication; etc.

All such elements, directly or indirectly, are present in the corporeality, understood as a creative expression of the set of body manifestation historically produced. This, also, wants to make

6-According to Taborda de Oliveira (1998, p. 131), the concept of corporeality is characterised by the '[...] set of body practices of the human being, its creative expression, conscious acknowledgement, and possibility to communication and interaction when searching for humanisation of human being and nature relationship [...] The corporeality interact in the social practice from language relations, power and labour, which are as frames for society'. For further information on such subject, see Taborda de Oliveira (1998; 2003).

possible the communication and interaction of different subjects with themselves and other, including the social and natural environment. Such manifestations are based on dialogue among different subjects in a social context, organised considering relations for power, language and work. (TABORDA DE OLIVEIRA, et al., 2008, p.305-306).

One can realise that the notion of corporeality, despite nearer a critical neo-Marxist perspective for syllabus and not fitting directly in a post-critical perspective, is full of questions put into discussions by such syllabus conceptions (ALMEIDA, 2006; NOGUEIRA, 2004; SILVA, 2004).

It was based on the contributions of such intellectual that the critical-liberating approach, both in the State of Paraná and in the municipality of Araucária, started to take its discursive hegemony which was answered. In the state level, the impact started in the later 2003, and the beginning of the building activities for the Syllabus (PARANÁ, 2007). In the municipality, it started in 2001 with the beginning of the activities to create the Municipal Guideline for Education (ARAUCÁRIA, 2004). In this two facts, the professor Taborda de Oliveira was invited to be the adviser of the new syllabus documents for the subject Physical Education⁷.

In the state, the power rivalries went to other path, resulting in a discursive overlap, i.e. a series of breaks and continuities (FOUCAULT, 2003), among the elements of corporeality, including the ones of critical-liberating approach. What I see in a first moment to establish the production of two proposals focusing on teaching of PE, i.e. one for the Primary School and the other for the Secondary School. The first one was created according to corporeality. By contrast, the discussions of Secondary School had as the main point he the critical-liberating approach.

In the state level, the power relations considered more the discourse of the critical-liberating methodology. It can be realised considering the fact occurred in civil service examination performed in

7-Regarding the national documents, as well as other states and municipalities of Brazil, such discursive impacts are also included, in particular after the publication of the National Curriculum Parameters (PCNs). However, as already mentioned, it is not included in this study.

December 2007 to contract professors. From the 20 questions presents in the specific test for PE, most people presented reflections from the critical-liberating approach. Such postures show clearly a choice by the critical syllabus theory that the state secretary has been performing. Such position was also very affected by the noise occurred in the Parana press in the later September 2007, including matters regarding the supposed Marxist content of the book *Livro Didático Público do Ensino Médio de Educação Física*⁸ (Teaching Public Book for Secondary School on Physical Education).

Such facts stress deeply the PE scenario in Paraná, since the critical thought, when seeing its discursive hegemony threatened by the new social dynamics, try to use a 'lawn mower' on the new syllabus theorisation. This fact is more obvious when the document of Primary School written in 2007 is extinct and a new one is created only using the theoretical matrix provided by the Critical-liberating approach⁹.

Therefore, if during the creation of the state syllabus the discussion was marked by a predominance of a critical discourse, in the municipality of Araucária, despite such discursive impact also being present, it will be seen differently by people.

Among critical discourse and post-critical discourse: the Syllabus of Araucária

The Syllabus of Araucária was document published in 2004. Within its first topic, named 'principles', was obvious the choice of the community in using the critical discourse. In such part, the question

8-I state that I do not agree with the content of the criticisms performed by the major newspaper of the respective State (Gazeta do Povo) regarding the book in hand, since most of that was a political attack to the government Roberto Requião and his brother, Mauricio Requião, secretary of education. However, I consider that the book on Physical Education one of the more important tools for the PE teaching within school. Such book is more known as political propaganda of the state government than a tool for the teaching work. Nevertheless, it is necessary more detailed analysis on such teaching material to avoid false dichotomy for the people who wants the change into the capitalist system and those who wants to keep the present social structure.

9-Despite 'erase' of the previous syllabus, some post-critical rhetoric keeps present in the new Syllabus of the Paraná State. (PARANÁ, 2008). I believe, however, that such permanence and breaks (FOUCAULT, 2003) should be more carefully assessed in a future study.

regarding historical-critic pedagogy, started in the state with the Basic Syllabus of 1990 and in the municipality with the Syllabus Planning of 1992/1993, continued as central elements.

It was chosen in the municipality developing the Historical–Critic Pedagogy, focusing on clarity of the social determinant, including the level in which the contradictions of the society mark the education. Thus, it took a position for such contradictions and decided collectively which the direction for the education. For Saviani the task of Historical–Critical Pedagogy regarding the school education is how to identify a more developed way in which is expressed the objective knowledge produced historically. Therefore, accepting the condition of the forms more developed in which is expressed the objective knowledge produced historically, recognising the conditions of the production and understanding the mains expression. Also, including the current trends of transformation, conversion of objective knowledge to school knowledge, supplying the necessary measures to the students absorb both objective knowledge while result and process of their production, including the trends of their transformation (ARAUCÁRIA, 2004, p. 7).

The critical line continued as the new syllabus centrepiece, so that occurs an update in the Saviani's thought, because reflections of other theorists, e.g. Leandro Konder, Newton Duarte and John Paro Vitor Luiz Gasparin, starts to be parallel to the creator of historical–critical pedagogy. However, regarding the topic on the teaching of Physical Education, one challenged the field of critical discourse.

According to Alvim de Oliveira and Taborda (2006), the new syllabus document of the municipality of Araucaria aimed to control the link of Physical Education for its two main paradigms, in particular the physical aptitude and body culture. The paradigm of physical aptitude had been questioned when creating the previous municipal syllabus (ARAUCARIA, 1993). However, the proposals for teaching PE, showed by the theoretical critical productions, although fundamental because it introduces historical and cultural dimensions, were questioned during the development of the Syllabus.

Similar to the state document, from the notion of corporeality, according to Taborda de Oliveira (1998, 2003), one thought a new Syl-

labus. This document is organised round four themes:

- Developing health and body building;
- Body expressiveness;
- Relating the body with the globalised world;
- The body that Plays also learns¹⁰.

Considering such axes, several points that exceed the critical theories emerged in the document:

The social problems within the school are articulated to the overall social structure and interfere in daily physical manifestations of the students and all subjects that are part of the school community, becoming object of frequent concern for educators, in particular for those responsible for physical education. Among those elements, it is stressed the sexualisation of children, constantly exploited by the media, violence, drug abuse, prejudice and stereotype of body, processes of exclusion expressed during the denial of access to cultural goods, which hit most of the population of that country and, hence, Araucaria. All these elements directly and indirectly are present in the corporeality, since each subject, when expressing themselves in different environments where they live, demonstrates their bodily habits, customs, beliefs and knowledge; finally, its culture and simultaneously when producing new cultural events. These are constituted by symbolic codes to individuals, in interaction with other people and social and cultural environment, produce possibilities of communication by using gestures, postures, looks and attitudes. (ARAUCÁRIA, 2004, p. 144-145).

Even in the main parts of the PE classical history, e.g. theme of health:

In addressing the issue of health, we can address issues, atti-

10-A more detailed description on the characterisation of how was thought and what consists each thematic axis, as well as all the process used to create the syllabus, can be found in the texts written by Cássia Helena Ferreira Alvim and Marcus Arurélío Taborda de Oliveira (2006) and Rubens Astorfí Júnior et al. (2007), as well as in the won PE proposal of the municipality (ARAUCÁRIA, 2004). For a comparison with the State Syllabi, see the text of Taborda de Oliveira et al. (2008), as well as the own state document (PARANÁ, 2007).

tudes and behaviours that interfere daily when acquiring health. One can deal with sexuality as a possibility for meeting, joy, energy, feelings, ways of being, desires and meanings learned in the process of the life history of each person. Understanding sexuality in this sense, also reflect the lack of knowledge of girls and girls with early pregnancy – of cause, because pregnancy can no longer be treated as problems of 'girls' – contracting diseases, sexual violence and even child prostitution. (ARAUCÁRIA, 2004, p.145-146).

This passage reveals that central themes of post-critical discourse, e.g. sexuality and gender, are present. Tabora de Oliveira et al. (2008, p. 314) indicate, even indirectly, the presence of such facts, when discussing on the axis of health in the state Syllabus:

This axis helps us to think the body as an intersection between nature and culture. At that meeting, resulted the prejudices and taboos related to the body (stressing that in physical education lessons the body is very exposed), the several vectors that comprise our corporeality (gender, ethnicity, social class, poverty, religion, migration, etc), quality for bodies (clean/dirty, ugly/beautiful, strong/weak, thin/fat, healthy/sick, free/trapped, male/female, young/old, etc), character for body support (fashion, accessories, consumption, etc), relation between body and environment. These, among many other aspects, can be encouraged by such axis, always when it is seen along with any proposal of guidelines.

However, as the syllabus is an area of "frequent" rivalry (SILVA, 2004), other discursive orders get reorganises and try to grow regarding official documents. With the change of municipal administration, in 2009, the renewed discussion on changes in the Syllabus, as happened in the State in 2008, starts in Araucaria. How it will end? It will be scenes for next chapter.

Conclusion

Finishing this article, I accentuate that the inclusion of the social dynamics from post-critical discourse can contribute greatly for the

growth of the role of school and physical education in society. I believe this may occur because such thoughts are not limited to economic determinants, dynamics of the concept of social class and profession. In addition, although such facts are very important, they erase the multicultural richness that school provides; and that, in my point of view, limits the possibilities of teaching Physical Education.

Another important point is that the entry of such elements in the syllabus is by no means an apolitical 'post-modern relativism', which weakens the struggle to overcome capitalism and even social inequalities. Quite the contrary, they are actually claims from various minority groups that exist in society and therefore must enter the schools, because only by understanding and discussing the various differences and individual identities we can actually get a different social model.

The differences should not simply be respected or tolerated. As they are being constantly made and remade, what one should focus on are precisely the power relations that govern their production. A syllabus based on such design is not limited therefore to teach tolerance and respect, however desirable it may seem. It would be necessary instead an analysis of the processes by which the differences are produced by relations of inequality and asymmetry. In a critical multicultural syllabus, the difference more than tolerated and respected is questioned. (SILVA, 2004, p. 88-89).

In this wise, elaborating the proposals for PE teaching which shows sensitivity to the tension of the questions raised by post-critical discourses are valid, even if they are at an early stage (DARIDO; RANGEL, 2005; NEIRA, 2009; TABORDA DE OLIVEIRA, 1998, 2003; VAZ et al. 2002). Such points can and should be studied in PE lessons, even if it brings deep uncertainties, or even if it changes the PE identity within school; therefore, when understanding the discipline this way, several practical consequences would affect the way of teaching PE in schools¹¹.

However, according to Foucault (2004), we must risk if we really want to build new life forms that evade dominant power relations. This is a great challenge to discuss on PE education syllabus of Brazil!

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