

# The Complexity of Brazilian Public School Physical Education Challenges from the Perspective of Students' Relationship to Knowledge

*La Complexité des Défis de L'Éducation Physique dans L'École Brésilienne du Point de Vue du Rapport au Savoir des Étudiant(e)s*  
*A Complexidade dos Desafios da Educação Física na Escolarização Brasileira na Perspectiva da Relação com o Saber dos(as) Alunos(as)*

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**ABSTRACT:** *In this article, our objective is to analyze three contemporary challenges to school physical education: epistemological, theoretical-methodological and pedagogical. We problematize the convergence between educational proposals by Charlot, Freire and Kunz as an epistemological challenge. Our perspective in the theoretical-methodological field is subsidized by the relationship to knowledge theory, with emphasis on the figures of learning, and in qualitative narrative research based on explicitation interviews. When discussing our results, we pointed out epochal units as a pedagogical challenge for assigning meaning in the teaching and learning processes. We analyze that the pedagogical intentionality covers the three challenges, but it is the perspective of each student as subjects of their own learning that fosters the teaching process. We consider that there is a fourth challenge, which refers to the notion of barbarism in the curricular field, exemplified by the BNCC. This curricular challenge needs to be confronted so that teaching physical education critically potentiates the students' learning.*

**CURRICULUM. META-ANALYSIS. PUBLIC SCHOOL.**

**RÉSUMÉ:** *Dans cet article, notre objectif est d'analyser trois défis contemporains de l'éducation physique à l'école: épistémologique, théorique-méthodologique et pédagogique. Nous problématisons la convergence entre les propositions pédagogiques de Charlot, Freire et Kunz comme un défi épistémologique. Dans le domaine théorique-méthodologique, notre perspective est subventionnée par la théorie du rapport au savoir, en mettant l'accent sur les figures de l'apprentissage, et dedans la recherche narrative qualitative, basée sur des entretiens d'explicitation. Lors de la discussion de nos résultats, nous avons souligné les unités d'époque comme un défi pédagogique pour donner du sens aux processus d'enseignement et d'apprentissage. Nous avons analysé que l'intentionnalité pédagogique couvre les trois défis, mais c'est la perspective de chaque élève, en tant que sujet de son propre apprentissage, qui favorise le processus d'enseignement. Nous considérons qu'il existe un quatrième défi, qui renvoie à la notion de barbarie dans le domaine curriculaire, illustrée par le BNCC. Ce défi curriculaire doit être relevé afin que l'enseignement de l'éducation physique améliore de manière critique l'apprentissage des élèves.*

**CURRICULUM. MÉTA-ANALYSE. ÉCOLE PUBLIQUE.**

**RESUMO:** Neste artigo, o nosso objetivo é analisar três desafios contemporâneos à educação física escolar: epistemológico, teórico-metodológico e pedagógico. Problematizamos a convergência entre proposições educacionais de Charlot, Freire e Kunz como desafio epistemológico. No campo teórico-metodológico, nossa perspectiva está subsidiada pela teoria da relação com o saber, com ênfase nas figuras do aprender, e na pesquisa qualitativa narrativa, baseada em entrevistas de explicitação. Ao discutirmos nossos resultados, apontamos as unidades epocais como desafio pedagógico para atribuição de sentido nos processos de ensino e aprendizagem. Analisamos que a intencionalidade pedagógica abrange os três desafios, mas é a perspectiva de cada aluno(a), como sujeito da própria aprendizagem, que fomenta o processo de ensino. Consideramos que existe um quarto desafio, que remete à noção de barbárie no campo curricular, exemplificado pela BNCC. Esse desafio curricular precisa ser confrontado para que o ensino da educação física potencialize criticamente a aprendizagem dos(as) alunos(as).

**CURRÍCULO. META-ANÁLISE. ESCOLA PÚBLICA.**

## Introduction

Criticality in educational processes depends on the transgression of curricular limits which try to legitimize hegemonic perspectives on the world and on human experience in this world (Hooks, 2013). In this sense, education can be the antithesis of barbarism by fostering “the values of solidarity and dignity that make human adventure in its universal, cultural and singular forms possible” (Charlot, 2019, p. 178). According to Charlot (2020), some questions can guide a counter-hegemonic educational perspective: What do we want to teach young people about the historical process of humanity? What are the human relationships, cultural differences, social practices, creative potentialities and forms of pleasure that we seek to teach? These reflections denote an anthropological approach to the knowledge necessary for educational practice (Charlot, 2019, 2020). For Freire (1991), as teachers we have spaces to uncover capitalist contradictions, despite the fact that the ideology that holds us back in school curricula is concealing. Progressive educational practice implies the relationships we establish with our students and the appreciation of their knowledge (Freire, 1996). We can take advantage of the structure of capitalists to do democratic teaching work exactly in the opposite direction of the capitalism ideology (Freire, 1991). We understand that there are convergences between the ideas of Charlot (2019, 2020) and Freire (1991, 1996) because, according to Hooks (2013), identifying gaps which allow this type of (self)critical teaching work is an anthropological effort that teachers-researchers need to implement in education.

This effort is anthropological because we create resistance artifacts with our behaviors (Daolio, 2001; Kentel & Short, 2008). By recognizing the daily limits of capitalism, we can point out its contradictions and weaknesses, and thus reinforce the transformative potential of education in our own lives and in that of each student. For Freire (1991), educational practice is based on critical optimism in the sense of uncovering truths, which is absolutely indispensable for changing the world. The challenge we have to confront scientific denialism and government attacks on teachers – at the end of February 2021, as we write this article – seems eerily similar to the context described by Freire (1991) 30 years ago. Some concerns have occupied our thoughts regarding the continuous attacks on teaching, especially in public schools since the presidential campaign in the second half of 2018 and, more acutely, by representatives of the Ministry of Education throughout 2019 and 2020. The most acute concern has been about the discursive emptying of the critical sense of Brazilian public education. If we consider the example of physical education as a curricular component – which, from a legal point of view, is within the school; but which still seeks to strengthen itself in a consistent way from the perspective of legitimacy - there are some dilemmas to face with the intention of establishing a dialogue of critical and emancipatory resistance (Kunz, 1994).

In this article, we aim to analyze three contemporary challenges to public school physical education: epistemological, theoretical-methodological and pedagogical. To do so, we initially

problematize the convergence between the educational propositions of Charlot (2000) on the relationship to knowledge; of Freire (1996, 2005) on the knowledge necessary for dialogical educational practice; and of Kunz (1994) on critical-emancipatory physical education, as an epistemological challenge. These three perspectives deal with the subject, which is why we emphasize the importance of Kunz's (1994) critical-emancipatory proposition, which emphasizes the subject of movement and its intentions in the world. The emphasis on the subjectivity, intentionality and expressiveness of students in their own movement is the main characteristic of the concept of Getting Moving, which in turn is implemented in contexts that have specific demands (Santos & Silva, 2019). Therefore, the subjects, students and teachers, and the concrete contexts in which school work takes place are relevant. For us, physical education is an area of knowledge with scientific and pedagogical bases, which aims to provide the student with critical appropriation of the culture of movement with games, sports, combat, dance, and gymnastics etc. (Betti, Ferraz & Dantas, 2011). Our concern is in the meanings attributed to the relationships to knowledge, taking into account the collective, ethical and political dimensions of the educational practice with physical education. Thus, we search for significant (self)educational experiences and we list the possibilities of bringing the concepts of Charlot (2000) and Freire (2005) closer to the *Self-Movement* concept proposed by Kunz (1994). We also present some reflections on the complexity of school physical education in order to delimit the scope of the research (Sanches Neto, Ovens, & Craig, 2015) and the problematization of relationships to knowledge (Venâncio, 2019).

## 1 The Complexity of Public School Physical Education

The work in schooling and investigations in the educational field from the point of view of public school physical education need to conceive that there are different situated contexts in which teachers work in Brazilian schools. Appreciating complexity in the collaborative work carried out by physical education teachers-researchers is defended by Sanches Neto, Ovens and Craig (2015). In this direction, those teachers who are concerned with school physical education in basic education and with the training of teachers in higher education have sought approximations between the discourses so that they do not oppose those who work at school or with a degree. The catalyst for our concern is precisely to avoid the intellectual simplicity that permeates the discourses about physical education in basic education, about which Taffarel and Escobar (1994) have already warned us, as well as the challenges to confront it. For Franco (2003), everyone involved with critical and reflective practices needs to recognize that investigations emerge from praxis contexts, and in this sense they can develop knowledge for the emancipatory processes of subjects. But how does physical education collaborate with this? The school, as an institution which pursues a project of a just society, makes some choices, and one of them is to avoid the homogenization of thoughts, especially those silenced historically and intentionally. Physical education needs to be subsidized by this understanding in the progressive field (Filgueiras & Maldonado, 2020).

The most diverse types of knowledge coexist in the contemporary world and can be organized in various ways. In recent centuries, we have called the attempts to institutionalize some knowledge in school as curriculum (Lopes & Macedo, 2011). In the Brazilian context, there has been a discipline called physical education since 1850 which, from a legal point of view, is the curriculum component that needs to teach certain cultural elements such as gymnastics, dance, wrestling, etc. (Bracht, 1999). However, the subjects who need to learn are at school obliged by their guardians and by the State and become aware of the right to study as this is explained to them. In this way, how can we help students discover the world or discover themselves in the perspective of learning, for example, a certain cultural element throughout their education process? This is the dilemma of the social relevance of school contents, as highlighted by Soares et al. (1992) and reinforced by Castellani Filho et al. (2009), because physical education should contribute to understanding inequalities from a critical perspective. According to Venâncio (2019), when we teach physical education, we assign some name to various elements of culture,

such as sports, games, and playing modalities etc., meaning that we reinforce an arbitrary identification for all these cultural elements that exist. Moreover, we make some inferences throughout this process and allow the students to discover ways to experience these cultural elements from their (inter)personal characteristics, and thus the process of reading and of writing the world, under a logic of physical education, is reconstituting and reconfiguring.

In this context, we are not a “sport pedagogue”; we are physical education teachers (González & Sanches Neto, 2018). This is important because, among the cultural elements, sport has hegemonic characteristics (Daolio, 2001). Thus, a child - as a student of basic education - can be in a physical education class, whose theme is learning basketball, and can question the teacher, saying: “I can’t throw the ball up to that height because I am small; look, my arm is small and I don’t have the strength to hold a ball and throw it up inside a hoop.” Let’s see, then, how much information was this child able to elaborate: he/she talks about height, weight, length, etc. He/she manages to make a relationship between where they are and a target that they need to hit and, in a way, they say something like this: “Why can’t I throw this ball at a target or a goal that is a little lower?” And, little by little, the child is able to understand these contradictions, but this understanding alone is not enough; it is important that we, as teachers-researchers, understand who this child is, who has their own characteristics, what life conditions they have and from which conditions they make all these inferences. This is the dilemma of complexity (Sanches Neto, Ovens & Craig, 2015).

Venâncio and Nobrega (2020) point us to other questions for reflection with some examples: can all women play basketball today? In which countries is there the possibility of playing basketball and what are the ways there are to play it? This type of problematization would be the responsibility of a physical education teacher who intends to teach a certain cultural element and who will make some choices. In this sense, we can also think beyond sport: why do certain manifestations of dance, as an element of culture, need to be taught in physical education classes? As teachers, we can choose a dance manifestation with a specific rhythm or a specific genre to thematize the possibilities of performing certain movements and from that to make associations. Who dances this cultural element? In which countries, where are they located? Is it predominantly a male or female dance? Do all people of indigenous cultures or African cultures dance this type of dance? What are the characteristic garments of this dance and how are they constituted and constructed? So, these are ways to systematize knowledge and help students who are in school make these discoveries.

However, according to Sanches Neto (2017), there is still the dilemma of class specificity. If I am the physical education teacher who teaches dance as a cultural element in basic education classes, but if I am also interested, for example, in teaching some manifestation in the afternoon<sup>1</sup> of classes for a group with fewer students, this second moment is not a physical education class. I can be the physical education teacher at the school, but when I open another time-space beyond the physical education class, I present a project and the children go to this new locus in an apparent contradiction. Let’s suppose that children are within a situated context of obligation to be in school, but they can at the same time make a choice in the afternoon to participate in a project that will work with a certain dance, for example. So, in this case, I have a small number of children who choose to attend another school time to learn other things. I can be the physical education teacher, but at that particular moment I will work on another manifestation and those children are in the condition of choice; they were not obliged, they were invited to participate in this project. And this is different from the context of having to be at school in a math, history, geography or physical education class environment for a minimum period of 12 years if we consider from the beginning of elementary school to high school (Venâncio et al., 2017). If we add early childhood education, this period can exceed 15 years of schooling and that is a long time in the life of a human being (Okimura-Kerr et al., 2017). It is enough time for, along with reading and writing, the

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<sup>1</sup> The period in which students do not have classes, but teachers are working under precarious conditions at school due to multiple shifts, because structurally most education networks in Brazil do not serve students in a single shift/time period.

teachers who work at the school to foster the criticality of a world view – collectively shared – regarding: what are the contents that we can problematize and systematize to teach them at school?

Precisely in this epistemological process of daily attribution of shared meanings, there are forces - such as the State within a capitalist world - which in an illusory way tells us that the public school, and that the practices in this public school, have to be of high quality; but that, at the same time, prepares documents which will, to some extent, control and say what knowledge teachers need to systematize at school (Sousa, Nogueira & Maldonado, 2019). This would be an opposing force to the epistemological dynamics. The other opposing force is that, such as the unworthiness of their own work, teachers do not feel capable or with the necessary competences to think of strategies to make the choices of certain knowledge to expand the world view of these children. These choices are necessary to confirm that the human being is, according to Charlot (2000), a being condemned to learn. But, according to Freire (1996), the great dilemma is what to learn, when to learn, who to learn from, how to learn, and how each student explains this learning. So, these would be the great dilemmas that correspond to the epistemological challenge of physical education in contemporary Brazilian schools: the obligation, the social relevance of the contents, the complexity and the specificity.

Therefore, we understand that the teachers-researchers responsible for teaching physical education in basic education and for training future teachers who will work with physical education at school cannot be the “sports pedagogue” or pedagogue of anything else (González & Sanches Neto, 2018). We all have to assume the critical professionalism of being teachers-researchers, especially when working in public elementary schools (Okimura-Kerr et al., 2017; Venâncio et al., 2017). In addition, we will make some decisions throughout schooling within basic education about what we will teach in the perspective of contributing to the critical emancipation process of students, in agreement with Kunz (1994), and break with coercive mechanisms and processes of control of bodies and learning. Thus, there is a convergence between the four epistemological dilemmas. The dilemma of students being in school from a perspective of being forced, as mothers and fathers have their own moral and ethical dilemmas, and within the school to make children and young people able to attribute meaning and meaning to what they learn, according to the social relevance of these contents. When a child learns to read and write, they start to read everything, they add the syllables and these processes are enriching. These are the semioses of semiotics (Betti, 1994). The logic is that physical education and cultural elements convergent to the specific dynamics of knowledge in the area could favor these complex discoveries of children. In the same way that they discover themselves in a world, capable of reading and writing, they can also discover themselves in the world by learning to realize other specific potentialities: to dance, to play, to spin, to do somersaults, to jump; recognize themselves together as boys/girls, whites, blacks, of indigenous peoples, of African origin or other cultural matrices. As an epistemological challenge, this implies that we need to seek relationships with the knowledge that students establish at school, because they are what give concreteness to the condition that we are all beings condemned to learn (Venâncio, 2019).

## **2 Problematization of the Relationships to Knowledge**

Elaborating knowledge in the field of school physical education has complex peculiarities in contemporary times. According to Venâncio (2019), the notion of relationship to knowledge in the field of school physical education implies a diversity of meanings attributed by students, and therefore requires investigating various relationships to knowledge. From the perspective of Molina et al. (2009), there is a need for epistemological investigations about students as subjects who learn. In this sense, it is research carried out with basic education students themselves which has the potential to deepen the criticality shared by their voices and experiences. So, it is necessary to increase efforts to value the relationships that students establish with knowledge from physical education classes. According to Charlot (2000), autonomy permeates these relationships. As the teaching and learning processes presuppose respect for the intersubjectivities of teachers and students, the notion of autonomy is imbricated in the relationships

between these subjects throughout education. However, the autonomy that is consistent with the criticality of the subjects has collective characteristics (Betti et al., 2015; Contreras Domingo, 2002; Freire, 1996). On the one hand, autonomy underlies the choices and individuality of subjects; on the other hand, autonomy is associated with sharing knowledge between subjects, and therefore contributes to confronting the individualism of school practices.

Thus, based on this notion of autonomy, the curriculum can be seen as a field of alternatives to enhance or constrain students' experiences as subjects of their own learning in school physical education. It is in this scope that criticality, as well as rebellion against the apparent ordering of what is socially established, is essential for elaborating knowledge. However, for Freire (1996), rebellion has a limit when teaching and learning; there is a time for rebellion and there is a time for revolution. Hooks (2013) adds that this time of revolution presupposes the transgression of the curriculum in educational practices. Then, school physical education must transgress the curricular limits arbitrarily pre-established for elaborating knowledge. This is the case of regional curricula in different Brazilian states and municipalities (Betti et al., 2015), and above all, for the Common National Curriculum Base (BNCC). In order to foster criticality, it is necessary to problematize knowledge in the teaching and learning processes. In the pedagogical treatment of the BNCC, it is possible to expand the complexity of bodily practices from and beyond the proposed skills and abilities in a critical perspective, as well as the learning objectives (Brasil, 2017, 2018).

For example, we can discuss the body practices which are viable in the students' own neighborhood and the constraints which make their experience with other elements of the movement culture unfeasible, with a critical and emancipatory character (Kunz, 1994). There are geographical demands involved in our pedagogical choices as teachers-researchers and in the relationship with the knowledge of each student in physical education classes. Appropriating the possibilities of experiences from the shared analysis of the neighborhood map, understanding its vicissitudes, can enhance students' critical sense, as pointed out by Ferreira et al. (2018) and by Rocha et al. (2018). Examples like this indicate that there is a need both for theoretical deepening to contextualize physical education in basic education curricula, as well as for coherence and methodological transgression as a politically and pedagogically engaged way of teaching. In turn, there is a theoretical-methodological challenge to school physical education. This challenge concerns the relationships with the students' knowledge, and we need to understand that there is a confrontation of each student with the "obligation to be in school" (Charlot, 2000). Charlot (2019, 2020) teaches us that there is a pre-existing world, with its knowledge, and that barbarism is an unacceptable choice because there is a human history that precedes us all. So, the relationship to knowledge requires us to study "this subject as confronted with the need to learn" and that "the subject of education is a social being" (Charlot, 2000, p. 34). Schooling/education has been built on anthropological foundations which tell us how the human being should be and what can be desirable by humans (Charlot, 2019). We understand that the anthropological perspective in school physical education, as pointed out by Daolio (2001), is in line with the intersubjectivity of the *Self-Movement* in relationships to knowledge (Venâncio, 2019).

### 3 Methodological Choices

We chose a qualitative itinerary in this research (Luttrell, 2010). In the theoretical-methodological field, our perspective is supported by the theory of the relationship to knowledge (Charlot, 2000), with emphasis on the figures of learning, and on qualitative narrative research (Molina Neto et al., 2009; Silva & Diehl, 2010) based on explicative interviews (Vermersch, 2010). According to Charlot (2000), the figures of learning denote specific types of knowledge, such as appropriating content (object-knowledge), mastering a specific activity, or relational knowledge, which take place from an epistemic point of view. With regard to the identity dimension of the relationship to knowledge, learning makes sense for the subject based on their life story, expectations, conceptions, relationship with others and the vision they

have of themselves. Thus, learning figures cover different types of knowledge. According to Silva and Diehl (2010), narrative research associated with school physical education indicates a certain tension between conceptual and theoretical-methodological nuances as it creates opportunities for reflection on the actions taken. This perspective is supported by Molina Neto et al. (2009) regarding investigations related to students as subjects of their own learning. In this sense, we seek to explain the meanings related to the students' knowledge. To do so, we used data generated through explicitative interviews (Vermersch, 2010).

According to Vermersch (2010), the explicitative interview constitutes a way of helping each subject to report on a singular moment as its central concern, bringing it to the surface in the present and detailing its description. Then we analyzed the evidence of relationships from the interviews with knowledge as epochal units. For Freire (2005), an epochal unit means a set of ideas, conceptions, hopes, doubts, values and challenges, in dialectical interaction with their opposites, seeking fullness. In turn, the analysis mode was longitudinally extended (over seven years) as a meta-analysis (Bicudo, 2014) of a set of 13 epochal units, having a doctoral thesis and a postdoctoral report as data sources. We had access to the entire study, including metadata, through the institutional repository of a Brazilian public university, with registration in the respective ethics committee and free and informed consent of the participants. A meta-analysis is characterized as an interpretative analysis that is later and broader than the interpretation limited to the original research, which according to Bicudo (2014), enables temporal rigor to the interpretation through a review of previously interpreted details. In order to contextualize the meta-analysis and respect the meaning of the original analyses, we established academic dialogue with those responsible for the consulted documents. The original interviews were carried out in focus groups (Gatti, 2005), followed by individual explicitative interviews (Vermersch, 2010). We used thematic coding for the meta-analysis through a critical interpretation of the meanings of each theme (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014).

## 4 Results and Discussion

We obtained a re-elaborated synthesis of the 13 epochal units from the perspective of young people who studied in a public school and had physical education classes with the same teacher for four years throughout elementary school II as evidence from the meta-analysis. We understand the complexity of educational experiences and knowledge of physical education teachers-researchers in elementary school II based on the reflections of Venâncio et al. (2017). We have explained the meaning of each epochal unit (Freire, 1996) and our re-elaboration in the light of the *Self-Movement* (Kunz, 1994) and the theory of the relationship to knowledge (Charlot, 2000).

### 4.1 Shame

Shame as a personal characteristic provokes in a student the perception that learning physical education also depends on being perceived by other subjects, such as the teacher and classmates. The shame associated with *Self-Movement* may be related to the context in which the subject's visibility is perceived (Santos & Silva, 2019). We understand that this intersubjective relationship takes time and certain (inter)personal characteristics need to be considered in order to not constrain the desire to learn. In this sense, the relational events to learn are hampered by shame. When considering the desire present in the relationship to knowledge, Charlot (2000) emphasizes the presence of a certain temporality in this dynamic. However, according to Venâncio (2019), it also refers to singularity because it follows the history of each one.

## ***4.2 Learning as an Obligation***

For a student, it is essential that the teacher and students somehow get in tune with the teaching and learning process. There is an obligation on the student to learn, as well as to be predisposed to learn when the teacher expresses an interest in teaching. The teacher's intentionality cannot overlap with the autonomy and intentionality of the student as a subject of the movement itself to avoid constraining the expressiveness of *Self-Movement* (Betti et al., 2015). We understand that this obligation is associated with the degree of relevance that each student gives to the teacher's authority, as someone who gathers experiences to be shared at school. In this sense, it seems that the student's interest turns to the teacher's interest in teaching, revealing a moral dilemma.

## ***4.3 Shared Difficulties***

The relationship of a student with physical education involves aspects which expose their difficulties with the content they learned, as well as in the face of the teacher's ways of motivating them to learn other content. For Charlot (2000), the mobilization process, and not the motivation, is more significant for the subjects based on the comparison of their desires. According to Okimura-Kerr et al. (2017) and Venâncio et al. (2017), the systematization of content in physical education needs to consider both the complexity of the converging dynamics (of culture, body, movement and the environment), and the dynamics of students' desires. We understand that the polarization between the contents and the teacher indicates that each student needs to find strategies to demonstrate that they have learned, calling attention so that the teacher identifies what is not satisfactory about each student's learning.

## ***4.4 Subjectivity and Individuality***

While differentiating students as subjects, the notions of subjectivity and individuality enable students to also recognize themselves. However, it is necessary to understand that there are differences between individualism and individuality. *Self-Movement* is linked to the individuality of the subjects, as well as the identity dimension of the relationship to knowledge (Charlot, 2000). We understand that there is recognition that learning about yourself takes time. The ability of each student to differentiate themselves from the other is what guarantees subjectivity, which in turn is the manifestation of the individuality of their way of being (Venâncio, 2019).

## ***4.5 Use of the Body***

The meaning attributed to the use of the body seems to be inscribed in a kind of ready speech and refers to a possible representation of knowledge inserted in a network of meanings. According to Charlot (2009), teaching students about their subject-body is a challenge to school physical education. We understand that each student gives the use of their own body a fundamental importance to perform certain functions, although they do not always attribute this type of importance during classes. Therefore, it is necessary that students have the opportunity to elaborate their learning in a more complex way. This perspective of complexity requires that school physical education confront the taboos associated with the body and corporeality of students (Lima et al., 2020).

#### ***4.6 Use of Gestures***

A very shy student resorted to small gestural demonstrations before and during their argument about their experiences with physical education. This student explained that it was very important to learn certain gestures during classes because it was something different from what they learned in street experiences. The environmental demands in each context have implications for the body codes chosen by the students, which correspond to the gestures in *Self-Movement* (Santos & Silva, 2019). We understand that each student can establish a different relationship with the knowledge “from the street” and the knowledge learned at school, so it is up to us, as teachers, to problematize the cultural elements from the perspective of the subject themselves as students. In this sense, we understand the emphasis that Freire (2005) gives to the issue of cultural invasion in education, forged in myths that prevent the dialogic action of students.

#### ***4.7 Teaching Mode***

One student stated at different times that what most caught their attention during classes was the teacher’s way of teaching. For the student, it is possible to have fun and at the same time get involved with their own learning because the teacher was concerned that no student give up learning. The concern with the way of teaching is made explicit in the classes, but also in planning the classes, which is not always visible to the students. According to Flor et al. (2020), participatory planning is a way of enhancing relationships to knowledge in physical education classes. We understand that the tension in the learning process is more associated with the dimension of individuality than with the collectivity, because in a group, students can laugh at their own mistakes and successes, as well as continue with new attempts to learn. The teaching method seems to challenge each student to mobilize to learn the contents during classes and beyond school. In this sense, according to Venâncio (2019), the relationship to knowledge in physical education needs to be understood from the temporality of the experiential flow of each student.

#### ***4.8 Evaluation and Choices***

One student argues that evaluation procedures exist so that the students themselves are able to evaluate what they knew and what they did not know, as well as the meaning of being evaluated. For them, assigning grades in physical education is part of a system that requires this procedure. However, in its logic, regardless of this system, assessment is important for each student to recognize their capabilities. This type of recognition requires openness to error, because *Self-Movement* demands openness to experimentation in the sense that classes are a safe space for students to make mistakes and have opportunities to learn from the mistakes made, which can be valued in the assessment instruments and criteria (Venâncio & Sanches Neto, 2019). This aspect is much debated in the academic field of physical education, as well as in the classes of the curricular component, but it is often associated with the performance and skill level which differentiate the learning of each student. In agreement with Venâncio and Sanches Neto (2019), we understand that assessment seems to have a more educative connotation for the students themselves than a knowledge leveler or linked to a grade that ratifies what they know or what they learned.

#### **4.9 Experiences**

The reference to the experience was recurrent in the speeches of a student when explaining how remarkable and significant the experiences they had were. For the student, the experiences with physical education represented moments of sharing difficulties and successes in a group. According to Venâncio (2019), the experiential flow is a determinant of both the subjectivity of *Self-Movement* and the temporality of the relationship to knowledge. In this sense, we understand that the experiences, in addition to starting from individual and collective experiences during the classes, generate opportunities for democratizing knowledge. For Freire (1991), teaching work politically engaged with a progressive field needs to be democratic. This educational practice is precisely the one that opposes barbarism (Charlot, 2020).

#### **4.10 Criticality**

One student mentioned the importance of being critical when taking a stand on aspects that they agreed with and shared with the other subjects. The student pointed out that this critical stance regarding physical education followed them since basic education classes because they learned not to accept any teaching in physical education. *Self-Movement* is in line with the critical and emancipatory perspective of school physical education (Kunz, 1994). We understand that the events of the classes need to be discussed and contextualized with the students with respect to the differences and difficulties of the students to learn some content. This sense is also associated with democratizing knowledge in public schools (Freire, 1991).

#### **4.11 Autonomy**

The expression “autonomy” for a student seems to indicate that each subject discovers and creates (together with others) their own perspective to make decisions that concern them, however without disregarding that others also make their own decisions. The contribution of school physical education to the education of autonomous and critical subjects requires promoting collaborative processes that value the intersubjectivity of students (Betti et al., 2015). We understand that differences form possibilities to guide the freedom to make autonomous decisions. In this case, there are decisions that consider the other – as a critical friend – in the sense of collaboration (Garbett & Thomas, 2020). However, autonomy is associated with the freedom of each student to become emancipated, in the sense of perceiving the contradictions which prevent him/her from desiring and making different decisions.

#### **4.12 Knowledge and Sensitivity**

There seems to be a distinction between wisdom and sensitivity for a student, at the same time that they make similar the perception and usefulness of theory, practice and aesthetic appreciation in moments lived in class. For example, their own body in the presence of an opposing body during a struggle experience. For Charlot (2009), teaching about the subject-body in physical education is a perspective that is consistent with the experiences and statements of knowledge as a domain. We understand that there are experiences that sharpen sensitivity to maintain focus in certain situations. Thus, each student can understand that learning situations allow them to discover the domain of certain knowledge, which no longer escapes the subject’s *Self-Movement*, as they are sensibly refined by the opportunity of experiencing.

### **4.13 Learning for Life**

In the understanding of a student, learning for life is being aware of something that was for him/her the expression of a unique experience in their life. We understand that we attribute a vivid and meaningful character to this type of experience with which each student can learn something because knowledge is mixed and differentiated by their own experiences (Venâncio, 2019). Thus, when we discuss the epochal units as a pedagogical challenge for attributing meaning in the teaching and learning processes, we understand that the pedagogical intentionality encompasses the three challenges, namely epistemological, theoretical-methodological and pedagogical, but it is the perspective of each student as the subject of learning itself which encourages the teaching process. As it is important to learn for life, contemporary uncertainty in educational practice is about how to teach each student to live and resist in a social context of barbarism and democratic rupture (Charlot, 2019).

## **5 Final Considerations**

From the three challenges that we analyzed in this article, we identified that education/schooling processes engender ethical and moral issues. On the one hand, there is an obligation for children and young people to be at school as students, and on the other hand, there is concomitantly an expectation of attributing meanings and significances to what they learn. We consider that there is a fourth challenge, which refers to the notion of barbarism in the curricular field, as exemplified by the *BNCC*, because the students' desires are made invisible by competences and abilities dissociated from their relationships to knowledge. This curricular challenge needs to be confronted so that the teaching methods of physical education teachers can critically enhance student learning. Therefore, we reinforce that the relationships to knowledge that students establish at school is what we – as teachers-researchers – need to seek to check the concreteness that we are all beings who are anthropologically obliged to learn. With the reinforcement of the explanation of the 13 epochal units, we conclude that there are several relationships to knowledge in school physical education that potentiate or constrain the *Self-Movement* of students. In this case, in unfolding the four challenges (epistemological, theoretical-methodological, pedagogical and curricular), we have a fifth challenge (anthropological), which consists of recognizing the complexity in the relationship to knowledge in each epochal unit.

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