

## Body, Dance and Physical Education Curriculum

### Cuerpo, Danza y el Curriculum de Educación Física

### Corpo, Dança e o Currículo da Educação Física

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#### Abstract

The study aimed to analyze the scientific production of the relationships that are being woven between the body, dance, and Physical Education curriculum in Brazil. It is characterized as documentary research of secondary character in public sources. Sixteen articles indexed in the Scielo and Lilacs databases were selected from an initial search of 995 articles. The relationship between dance, body, and the Physical Education curriculum (analytical categories) took different configurations in the included articles. The rigorous, categorical, and thematic investigation led us to establish four empirical categories that structure the relationships between dance, body, and the Physical Education curriculum: Instrumentalization of the Body, Gender, Language and Epistemology. We conclude by recognizing that the relationship between body, dance and the Physical Education curriculum was not established as a direct object in the articles mapped in this documentary research. However, these articles contribute to a better understanding of how the Physical Education curriculum has been appropriating discussions about the body in its intersection with dance.

**Keywords:** Body; Curriculum; Dance; Physical Education.

#### Resumen

El estudio tuvo como objetivo analizar la producción científica de las relaciones que se están tejiendo entre el currículo de Cuerpo, Danza y Educación Física en Brasil. Se caracteriza por



ser una investigación documental de carácter secundario en fuentes públicas. Se seleccionaron dieciséis artículos indexados en las bases de datos Scielo y Lilacs de una búsqueda inicial de 995 artículos. La relación entre la danza, el cuerpo y el currículo de Educación Física (categorías analíticas) tomó diferentes configuraciones en los artículos incluidos. La investigación rigurosa, categórica y temática nos llevó a establecer cuatro categorías empíricas que estructuran las relaciones entre la danza, el cuerpo y el currículo de Educación Física: Instrumentalización del cuerpo, género, lenguaje y epistemología. Se concluye reconociendo que la relación entre el cuerpo, la danza y el currículo de Educación Física no se estableció como objeto directo en los artículos mapeados en esta investigación documental. Sin embargo, estos artículos contribuyen a una mejor comprensión de cómo el currículo de Educación Física se ha ido apropiando de las discusiones sobre el cuerpo en su intersección con la danza.

**Palabras clave:** Cuerpo; Currículum; Danza; Educación Física.

### Resumo

O estudo teve como objetivo analisar a produção científica das relações que vêm sendo tecidas entre o corpo, a dança e o currículo de Educação Física no Brasil. Caracteriza-se como pesquisa documental de caráter secundário em fontes públicas. Dezesesseis artigos indexados nas bases de dados Scielo e Lilacs foram selecionados a partir de uma busca inicial de 995 artigos. A relação entre dança, corpo e currículo de Educação Física (categorias analíticas) assumiu diferentes configurações nos artigos incluídos. A investigação rigorosa, categorial e temática nos levou a estabelecer quatro categorias empíricas que estruturam as relações entre dança, corpo e o currículo de Educação Física: Instrumentalização do Corpo, Gênero, Linguagem e Epistemologia. Concluímos reconhecendo que a relação entre corpo, dança e currículo de Educação Física não foi estabelecida como objeto principal nos artigos mapeados nesta pesquisa documental. No entanto, esses artigos contribuem para uma melhor compreensão de como o currículo de Educação Física vem se apropriando das discussões sobre o corpo em sua interseção com a dança.

**Palavras-chave:** Corpo, Currículo, Dança; Educação Física.

### Introduction

“The fact is that, so far, no one has determined what the body can do”. With this assertion, Spinoza (2018, p. 101) shifts our focus away from Western philosophical questions about the body’s relationship to the mind, soul, reason, experience, or even its biological and physiological parts. Spinoza invites us to experience the body itself, no longer subordinated or superior to its human and social components.

Spinoza (2018) makes this assertion in the third part of his *Ethics*, where he discusses the origin and nature of affections. He begins by opposing Descartes’ position on the relationship between mind and body, stating in his second proposition that the mind cannot determine the body, nor can the body determine the mind. They are both attributes of nature and function simultaneously. In this sense, we begin our article with Spinoza to propose a reflection aligned with his position, suggesting an investigation into what the body can do by itself, as materiality.



Spinoza's discussion on the materiality of the body connects with contemporary post-structuralist scholars. In Physical Education (PE), outside Brazil, we observe a heated debate about the body as matter, materialization, and nature, initiated by researchers such as Larsson (2014) and Evans, Davies, & Rich (2013). While they do not refer directly to Spinoza, they explore the continuity and discontinuity of the physical body and the social body from two different approaches. One focuses on the materiality of the linguistic, social, and political body, engaging in discussions about bodies that matter, considering socially constructed differences and the conditions that create them. Larsson (2014) highlights post-structuralism as a semiotic hermeneutics. On the other hand, another perspective - though not far removed - considers the materiality of the physical body while acknowledging subjectivities as crucial. This perspective combines its discussion with biological and health sciences, for example, when addressing eating disorders (Evans, Davies, & Rich, 2013). In Brazil, discussions about the materiality of the body in PE are sparse, though they do surface in artistic dance practices and the school dance curriculum.

According to Bracht (2011), the core of the debate surrounding the Brazilian PE curriculum lies in the disputes between the objects of study, which focus on body culture, movement culture, and body movement culture. All of these perspectives place culture at their center. By prioritizing the body, movement, or both, the epistemological and methodological assumptions for PE curriculum's pedagogical practice diverge. However, these differences stem from epistemological approaches to PE based on the relationship between education and society. As a result, they fail to address the body as itself, despite recent growth in studies on the non-biological body in PE (Baptista, Castro, & Lüdorf, 2017).

Recently, authors such as Vaz (2019) and Correia, Zoboli & Almeida (2023) have addressed the absence of discussions on the materiality of the body in PE, questioning the Marxist ontology that underpins some positions on body culture, which have neglected the body itself. Almeida et al. (2018) reviewed studies on the body in five Brazilian PE journals from 1987 to 2012 from a sociocultural and pedagogical perspective, pointing out that plurality has taken root in the field. They identified four categories in their analysis: body and education, body and representation, body and gender, and body and technology. Within the first category, they highlighted the power of the "culturalist turn of the body" in the context of PE. They identified two discursive trends: one focused on a living, affective, ecological, and existential body, and another addressing the communicative potential of this body in producing meaning. Both trends anchor the body in its capacity to exist and represent.

In contrast, studies of dance as an art form in Brazilian schools, as discussed by Corrêa & Santos (2019; 2014), show that primary and secondary education curricula are connected to artistic dance practices. Since the 1990s, studies on contemporary dance in Brazil have emphasized the body as a medium for dance (Katz & Greiner, 2008; Greiner, 2008, 2010). These studies situate the body in a dynamic flow of meaning between the body and its environment, proposing a body-media theory (Greiner, 2010, 2008). This body is not existential or communicative, as identified by Almeida et al. (2018) in PE, but rather it emerges as materiality, constantly engaging in environmental exchanges. It becomes a language, cognition, thought, and politics. As Katz & Greiner (2008, p. 133) put it:



[...] not everything that is communicated operates around already codified messages. There are different rates of coherence, including, for example, the communication of states and sense nexus that modify the body. These processes take place in the real time of changes that are yet to come, in the environment, in the sensory-motor and nervous system.

In both PE and dance curricula in schools, there has been a “turn” toward the body. However, the two approaches are either in conflict or, at least, in intense tension (Brasileiro, 2022). In the dance curriculum, connected to contemporary dance practices, the body is presented as itself, in line with Spinoza’s view. In contrast, the PE curriculum emphasizes the body’s social and cultural relationships, neglecting its materiality (Vaz, 2019; Correia, Zoboli & Almeida, 2023). As Evans, Davies, & Rich (2013) noted a decade ago, discussions on the materiality of the body in PE’s sociological discourses remain rare.

Given these two approaches to the materiality of the body in Brazilian school curricula (PE and dance education), and the fact that dance is one of the subjects taught in the PE curriculum, we pose the following question: How does PE establish discussions about the body when it connects with or interrogates dance in the school curriculum? The aim of this research is to analyze scientific literature on the relationships between the body, dance, and the PE curriculum.

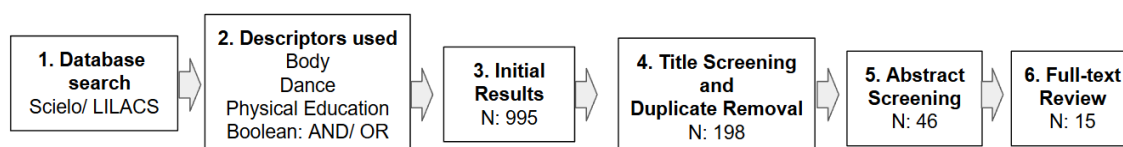
## Methodology

This research is defined as documentary research of secondary character, in public sources, developed based on four criteria listed by Mogalakwe (2009) for a rigorous documentary survey: authenticity (respect for original documents), credibility (freedom from distortions), representativeness (correspondence to the reality investigated) and comprehension (clarity of sources).

Searches were carried out in the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) and Latin American and Caribbean Literature in Health Sciences (Lilacs) databases. SciELO covers Brazilian scientific production and Lilacs is the most important and comprehensive index of scientific and technical literature in Latin America and the Caribbean in the area of Health Sciences, to which PE is linked in Graduate Studies, according to the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES). The descriptors body, dance and PE were used with Boolean operators “and” and “or”.

Inclusion criteria were articles published from 2008 to 2020; original articles (theoretical or empirical) that address the body, dance, and the Brazilian PE curriculum, showing a relationship between the three themes. Excluded were essays, experience reports and articles where research type or methodology were unclear or not directly or indirectly related to the Brazilian PE curriculum.

The review was conducted between July 10 and 30 and updated between August 20 and 30, 2020 (Flowchart 1). Initially, 995 articles were found. After reading titles and removing duplicates, 198 articles remained. After reading the abstracts, 46 articles were eligible, and after full reading 15 articles were selected. One additional article was added from reading selected articles, totaling 16 articles.



Flowchart 1. Search strategy – Scielo and LILACS (conducted between July and August, 2020).  
Source: Authors.

Data were subjected to categorical content analysis by theme, referencing Bardin (2011) and Minayo (1998) through identifying and organizing categories.

Bardin (2011, p. 104), states that content analysis “consists in discovering the cores of meaning that compose the communication, the presence or frequency of appearance of which may mean something for the analytical objective”. This analysis identifies analytical and empirical categories. The former are the central axes of the object under analysis: body, dance, and PE curriculum; and the latter were built based on articles content analysis. Minayo (1998, p. 84) states these “apprehend the determinations and specificities that are expressed in the empirical reality”.

Our analytical procedure consisted of a thorough reading of the selected articles, through which we identified recurrent discursive patterns employing a fully inductive analytical approach. Certain lexical elements were interpreted as semantic markers, signaling core meaning configurations. These findings were then organized into four interpretative categories, whose nuclei of meaning were delineated and subsequently articulated with the broader theoretical debate concerning our object of study.

## Presentation and discussion of results

### Characterization of the sample

The presentation and discussion of the results were carried out in two stages. First, we present the bibliometric data of the included articles. On the second stage, we examine the categories that intersect the articles, establishing relationships between dance, body and Brazilian PE curriculum. This second stage involves presenting a descriptive framework with the analytical and empirical categories, including author, date, objectives, and outcomes of the articles. Subsequently, we analyze the relationships identified from the empirical categories

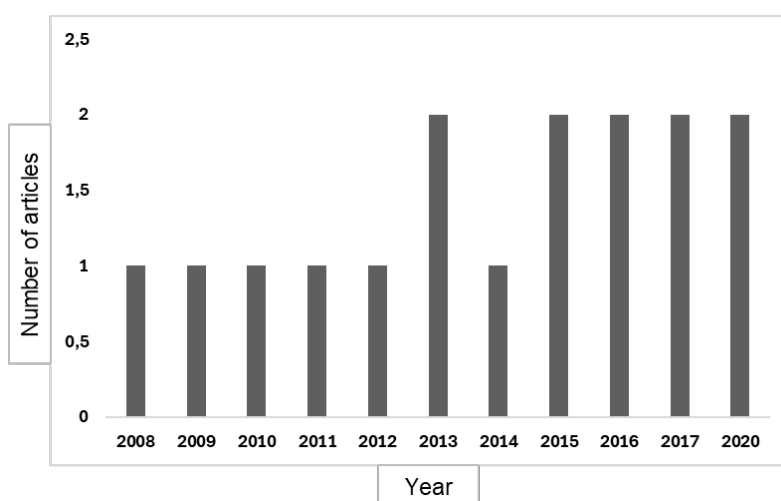
The sample consisted of 16 articles produced by 38 authors with only 3 repeated authors. Although the number of articles included is just over 1% of the initially identified universe, the diversity of authors indicates the existence of several research centers with interest, although often tangential, in the relationship between the themes of body, dance and PE curriculum.

Considering the period 2008 to 2020 as a temporal marker, we observed the publication of 1 article per year in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2014, and 2 articles per year in 2013,



2015, 2016, 2017, 2020. In 2018, there were no publications (Graph 1). Almost all articles were published in PE related journals, with emphasis on national ones: *Pensar a Prática* (3 articles); *Movimento*, *Revista Brasileira de Ciências do Esporte*, *Motrivivência*, *Motriz* and *Revista de Educação Física da UEM* (2 articles each); *Revista Brasileira de Educação Física e Esporte* (1 article). Additionally, we included 1 article - by Brazilian authors in a foreign journal, *Educación Física e Ciência*. Only one article was published in an education journal (*Educação em Revista*). The distribution suggests a growing interest in the relationship between the themes of body, dance, and PE curriculum. Baptista, Castro & Lüdorf (2017) also had noted this trend in the production of knowledge around the concept of body education.

Another aspect observed in the sample was the most cited authors in the articles are from the specific area of PE and other areas. In the context of Philosophy Maurice Merleau Ponty was cited in 3 articles. In Anthropology, Clifford Geertz and Marcel Mauss were each cited in 2 articles. In Feminist Studies, Joan Scott and Guacira Lopes Louro were each cited in 3 articles. In Dance Isabel Marques was cited in 4 articles and Carla Morandi in 3 articles. In PE with its interface with Dance, Maria do Carmo Oliveira Saraiva was cited in 6 articles and Livia Tenorio Brasileiro in 4. In discussions about body and gender, Silvana Vilodre Goellner was the most mentioned author with 3 citations. In the specific field of PE curriculum, the Coletivo de Autores and Elenor Kunz were each cited in 5 articles.



Graph 1. Number of published articles per year.  
Source: Authors.

Regarding the methodologies used in the articles, analytical research (11) of the theoretical, bibliographical or review type predominated, with analysis of various documents (curriculum guidelines and directions, school documents, books, and articles). This was followed by comprehensive or qualitative field research (4) of ethnographic, phenomenological, exploratory,

descriptive types and action research with data collection mainly through observation and recording. There was also a study characterized as quanti-qualitative. These data demonstrate that the proposed relationship is still incipient from the perspective of testing, description, understanding and intervention studies, with most studies characterized by discussions of concepts and documents.

### Categorizations undertaken in the relationships woven

The relationship between dance, body, and the PE curriculum (analytical categories) took different configurations in the included articles. The rigorous, categorical, and thematic investigation led us to establish four empirical categories that structure the relationships between dance, body, and the PE curriculum: Instrumentalization of the Body, Gender, Language and Epistemology (Chart 1).

Chart 1. Empirical Categories.

| ANALYTICAL CATEGORIES | EMPIRICAL CATEGORIES            | AUTHORS/DATE                             | PURPOSE  |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|
| BODY                  | Instrumentalization of the body | Kawanishi & Amaral (2008)                | Debate on body education as a content of early childhood educational institutions, dialoguing with the different conceptions of this pedagogical action in the Brazilian reality.                          |
| PHYSICAL EDUCATION    | Instrumentalization of the body | Surdi, Melo & Kunz (2016)                | Investigate how children's play and movement happen in PE classes in early childhood education.  |
| BODY                  | Instrumentalization of the body | Stroher & Musis (2017)                   | Analyze the social representations that PE undergraduate students /UNEMAT campus Cáceres-MT have about working with the body/student at school.  |
| DANCE                 | Gender                          | Kleinubing, Saraiva & Franchischi (2013) | Understand how the experience of dance in PE classes can be perceived as a space-time of sharing experiences, related to movement and gender stereotypes, enabling the (trans)formation of subjectivities. |
| PHYSICAL EDUCATION    | Gender                          | Prado & Ribeiro (2010)                   | Conceptualize "gender" and "sexuality", thinking of providing theoretical and analytical subsidies so that their relations with school PE can be used for the pedagogical process.                         |
| DANCE                 | Language                        | Kleinubing <i>et al.</i> (2012)          | Analyze a dance teaching proposal for high school, based on a critical-emancipatory approach, emphasizing the expressivity in dance gestures and movements.  |





| ANALYTICAL CATEGORIES | EMPIRICAL CATEGORIES | AUTHORS/DATE                      | PURPOSE   |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| DANCE                 | Language             | Sousa, Hunger & Caramaschi (2014) | Analyze whether the contents related to dance are broken down in the PPP (Political Pedagogical Project) of schools; how dance teaching is presented in Art and PE classes; what is the teachers' knowledge about the dance content recommended in the PCN (National Curriculum Parameters); point out that the two components have in common the understanding of body expression as language. |
| DANCE                 | Language             | Diniz & Darido (2015)             | To analyze how the dance content is displayed in the State Curriculum Proposals (PCE) of PE in Elementary School, outlining how the dance content is approached in these documents as part of the area of knowledge Language.   |
| PHYSICAL EDUCATION    | Language             | Pertuzati & Dickman (2016)        | To disclose, if any, the convergent and divergent points between the Brazilian educational documents on literacy, highlighting the perspectives of body culture on the area of knowledge of Language.   |
| DANCE                 | Language             | Gehres (2020)                     | To analyze dances in schools in a network that is composed of displacements in contemporary dances and teaching of dance.   |
| DANCE                 | Language             | Gehres, Bonetto & Neira (2020)    | Mapping (Deleuze; Guattari, 1996) reports of experiences with dances, within the scope of the GPEF, understanding the bodies of the dances as the contents proposed by the cultural curriculum of PE.   |
| DANCE                 | Epistemology         | Buogo & Lara (2011)               | Analyze how the dance content is approached in the Curriculum Guidelines for Basic Education of Paraná in order to point out advancements and limitations, as well as enhance reflections that contribute to the teaching action related to dance at school.  |
| PHYSICAL EDUCATION    | Epistemology         | Mendes & Nóbrega (2009)           | Analyze Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, highlighting, above all, his discussion about the relationships between body, nature and culture, the fundamental reference for the dialogue with the Human Sciences and PE.   |
| PHYSICAL EDUCATION    | Epistemology         | Almeida, Bracht & Ghideti (2013)  | Describe the presence of the phenomenological framework in the field of the Brazilian PE curriculum.  |



| ANALYTICAL CATEGORIES | EMPIRICAL CATEGORIES | AUTHORS/DATE                   | PURPOSE  |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| PHYSICAL EDUCATION    | Epistemology         | Eusse, Almeida & Bracht (2017) | Analyze the proposal of <i>Expresiones Motrizes</i> as developed in Colombia, in a kind of comparative dialogue with the proposition of Body Culture presented in the Brazilian context.   |
| DANCE                 | Epistemology         | Santiago & Franco (2015)       | Conduct a theoretical survey on the relationship between dance and PE; select scientific publications related to dance and PE available on the RBCE website; identify how the dance theme is addressed in the RBCE, highlighting the predominant quotes in these publications. |

Source: Authors.

### Instrumentalization of the body

The concept of instrumentalization of the Body emerged from the studies by Kavanishi & Amaral (2008), Surdi, Melo & Kunz (2016) and Stroher & Musis (2017). The first two studies have a temporal (2008 and 2016) and geographic (Campinas-SP and Capinzal-SC) distance as well as difference in study type (documentary and field observation), and focus (documents on Early Childhood Education in general and pedagogical practices of PE teachers), although they present similar results regarding the relationship between body, dance and school PE curriculum. Both highlight the predominance of psychomotor perspectives and a potential focus on education of the body in Early Childhood Education. In these studies, the body-instrument and the dance-medium serve the purposes of developing motor skills and/or health through the reproduction of dances such as those observed in rehearsals for school parties.

In Kavanishi & Amaral (2008), we find the dominance of a psychomotor and developmental conception associated with the traditional health paradigm. Dance is specified as the means for educating the body in the developmental and health contexts. In Surdi, Melo & Kunz (2016), it is noted that teachers already bring the movement aspect, especially in dance rehearsals for Brazilian June Festival parties.

Stroher & Musis (2017, p. 234), who analyzed the social representations of working with the body in undergraduate students, emphasized the notion of body/student “[...] as the totality and centrality of schools actions”, not separating “[...] the role of the student from his corporeality”. Their research posed the question: “For you, how is the body worked in schools?”. The results pointed to themes of body culture (Coletivo de Autores, 2012), however, the relationship with dance was interpreted as a “body-instrument” to be developed by the “dance-medium”, diverging from the critical propositions of this PE pedagogy.

Although Batista, Castro & Ludorf (2017) demonstrated how the “education of the body” has been studied in the field, mainly in PE, based on references from the Social and Human Sciences,



we identified the category “instrumentalization of the body” through dance due to the presence of psychomotricity (instrumental) and a developmental and/or health promotion perspective, indicating the influence of psychobiological thinking.

The criticism of the instrumentalization of the body in Brazilian PE has been developed by authors who interpret it as a reflection of modern utilitarianism in institutionalized educational practices (Faure & Garcia, 2003; Blay, 2009). Such utilitarian school thinking prioritized the importance of construction of bodies as useful machines, with the goal of unleashing physical, moral, economic, and social effects (Arnal, 2008). Agreeing with Gleyse (2017), who considers the instrumentalization of the body as a process of transforming the natural body-data into a manipulable body-instrument, we believe that the studies analyzed assume dance at school as an experience to reach a useful-final state, characterized by 1) a scheme of repetitions and rhythms poor in meaning and 2) a flow of interiorization of the vital course reduced to the mere formatting of its being-subject as a standardized phenomenon.

Thus, dance at schools seems to serve the purpose of docilization, aiming to attenuate subjective tensions instead of valuing the exploration and development of what Faure and Garcia (2003) call “more subjective parameters”: imagination, invention, quality of movement, expression of emotions and ideas.

## Gender

The Gender category was explored in studies by Kleinubing, Saraiva & Franchischi (2013) and Prado & Ribeiro (2010) as a social construction. This is confirmed by studies such as Altmann, Mariano & Uchoga (2012), who describe how the daily and pedagogical actions of teachers and educators in Early Childhood Education create gender-differentiating body environments from an early age.

Kleinubing, Saraiva & Franchischi (2013) highlight the tensions in high school dance classes, where stereotypes of body, movement and gender (male and female), biologically, culturally, and socially defined are experienced and reproduced. These stereotypes exist, are lived, and reproduced, even though moments of questioning and tension can produce other forms of dancing. In other words, research shows that stereotypes related to dance, movements, the biological and sociocultural body, and gender find in dance the possibility of being challenged.

However, Forrestier & Larsson (2023) state that male and female hetero norms are reinforced in secondary school dance classes, where girls are in charge of choreographing tasks reinforcing male and female roles: girls create and boys execute. Dance is perceived as a female practice with girls teaching boys how to conduct themselves in traditional ballroom dance. Despite girls being in a dominant position, they preserve and reproduce the deep roles of being a man and a woman in a heteronormative society. What initially appeared as a power challenge became a double oppression, reinforcing gender stereotypes and roles.

Prado & Ribeiro (2010), in a theoretical discussion on gender and sexuality, point out how PE classes can be a space for experiencing and discussing different bodies and subjective experiences, as depicted in the film *Billy Elliot*, where a working-class boy faces prejudices and projections of masculinity from his family and community when he decides to pursue dancing.

In this context, dance can contribute to understanding gender as it encompasses issues of social class, ethnicity, race, and power, allowing them to be felt, simulated and reinterpreted. Foucault (2005) classic study on the history of sexuality, particularly the first volume (The Will to Know), despite not dealing with dance, demonstrates how some of these aspects influence the formation of knowledge about the body, gender, and sexuality.

Studies by Laqueur (2001) on the scientific invention of sexuality, Moutinho (2004) comparing gender formation to racial aspects in South Africa and Brazil, and Del Priore (2011) on the construction of intimacy associated with gender roles in Brazilian society, follow Foucault's path, contributing to a genealogy of sexuality that underscores the importance of understanding, discussing and thinking about gender as a relational construct.

Unlike the previous topic (Instrumentalization of the Body), body and dance are understood not as instruments or means with utilitarian, normalizing and reductionist character, but as social and cultural constructions. Dance is recognized as space-time composition of gender, as presented in the works of Kleinubing, Saraiva & Franchischi (2013) and Prado & Ribeiro (2010).

Historically, PE has reinforced gender inequalities by establishing practice limits based on criteria of masculinity and femininity (Dunning; Maguire, 2010). Although biology is a determining factor, the studies investigated show that PE can contribute to reflecting on the naturalization of these problems and the censoring they cause. This is confirmed by studies analyzing women's participation in sports (Goellner, 2005; 2009; Santos, 2009; Knijnik, 2010) and men's participation in dance (Lacerda, 2010; Melo; Lacerda, 2010; Santos *et al.*, 2015), indicating resistance to the sexuality device and highlighting the loss of opportunities to experience and explore the richness of body movement culture for human development.

## Language

The third relationship was established through Language. The appropriations of dance as body language in the PE curriculum are mentioned in the works of Kleinubing *et al.* (2012), Sousa, Hunger & Caramaschi (2014), Diniz & Darido (2015) and Pertuzati & Dickman (2016).

Kleinubing *et al.* (2012), based on the framework of critical-emancipatory PE (Kunz, 1991), or the culture of movement, as it became known, state that they worked on expressiveness in dance to develop communicative competence. Expressivity in dance is thus understood in the action research described:

Gestures and movements are human expression, and this is everything that exceeds merely mechanical movement. And it is this transcendence of the purely biomechanical that makes us human, capable of observing and creating and developing very different possibilities of movements, yet aware of an expressive and significant gesture (Kleinubing *et al.*, 2012, p. 721-722).

Sousa, Hunger & Caramaschi (2014) analyze the National Curriculum Parameters of Brazil (PCN) of Art and PE, used as a reference for the elaboration of the Political Pedagogical Project



of schools in Bauru-SP. When identifying the proximity between them, they point out that the two components have in common the movement of the body and the fact that they understand body expression as language. Taking Scarpatto (2004) as a reference, they state that the teaching of dance:

Must assume that movement is a form of expression and communication for the student, aiming to make them a critical, participative, and responsible citizen, capable of expressing themselves in various languages, developing self-expression and learning to think in terms of movement (Sousa, Hunger & Caramaschi, 2014, p. 507).

Here, as before, communication and expression are the meanings attributed to the understanding of dance as body language in PE classes at school. Diniz & Darido (2015) and Pertuzati & Dickman (2016), in theoretical studies and analysis of state proposals for the PE curriculum, legislation, and curriculum documents on literacy, point to body culture as central to the Brazilian PE curriculum. Diniz & Darido (2015) identify this designation in almost all of the state curricular proposals studied, although with different references: the first in the understanding that bodily practices are part of human culture (8 proposals); and the other, centered on the critical references identified with the proposal of the Coletivo de Autores (2012) (5 proposals), in an understanding of body culture and body expression as language. Furthermore, a proposal that refers directly to the language reference. Even though the generalist cultural perspective was predominant when understanding body culture, we detect that curricular documents are often more generic, seeking to guarantee autonomy in the interpretation by the teachers.

Pertuzati & Dickman (2016) build their perspective of body culture from within official documents (BNCC), in the field of PE and body practices. Dance, one of its themes, is located in the area of knowledge of Languages, which highlights the concepts of literacy in several languages, forms of communication and expression.

As observed in these three studies, dance is directly related to movement or body expression, even though all of them did not expand their discussions about its meaning. Concerning specifically Diniz & Darido (2015) and Pertuzati & Dickman (2016), in their analysis of Brazilian documents on the field of the PE curriculum, it's clear that the whole discussion comes from a generic understanding that comes from the PE pedagogical proposals which state the PE object of study "body expression as language" (Coletivo de Autores, 2012), or related to the understanding that movement of the body or even just movement are means of expressing culture, social conditions, personal emotions or personal characteristics. This is also perceived as language in the sense of communication.

To investigate the relationship between PE and language, Barros (2017) conducted an analytical study of recent developments in PE, in which he mapped articles, theses, dissertations and PCNs, to analyze how the conceptual convergence of PE and language took place in the time interval between 2000 and 2015. An initial finding demonstrates that most of the documents under analysis were identified through a selection with the descriptors of PE and body combined, with few findings around the descriptors language, body language and body expression. The second finding is the emergence of categories that point to language, predominantly, as communication, but also as: culture, history, and reality; sign, sense and meaning; action; power; essence of being;



emotion. Therefore, corroborating our findings, the study by Barros (2017) indicates that language emerges in PE studies in an incipient way and, above all, as communication.

In fact, the definition of language is strictly related to communication. However, communication processes established through language carry aspects that go beyond the transmission and reception of diversified information. That is, the language/communication relationship is expressed in the construction/production of reality, in a poetic, social and dynamic game of rules, symbols, codes and meanings, considering elements such as language and speech, for example (Vygotsky, 2000; Bakhtin, 2014).

For Gomes-da-Silva *et al.* (2005), in PE there seems to be an inconsistency regarding the understanding of body expression as a gestural message, that is, the ability to produce meanings/senses with gestures, substantiating the conceptual narrowing conferred to the perception of language in the area. However, more recent studies point to an expansion and a qualification of the relationship between PE and Language (Neira, 2019; Nunes, 2016), when considering the impact of the linguistic turn on knowledge. Within the scope of the investigated documental *corpus*, Gehres (2020) and Gehres, Bonnetto & Neira (2020) fall within the scope of these productions.

Gehres (2020), when discussing the displacements promoted by artistic productions in dance during the 20th century - especially the distancing from representation and movement, to establish dance as a political action and the body as mobilizers of contemporary dance, approaches the productions that will anchor the discussions of dance within the PE curriculum, with Marques (2014). In this movement, the author proposes to deepen the discussions on dance as body language in the context of PE. Gehres, Bonnetto & Neira (2020), on the other hand, are more explicit in their approach to dance in PE as non-representational body language, taking the guidelines of Deleuze and Guattari (1995) as a reference to analyze dance production with the Research Group in School PE (GPEF), in its relations between bodies and dance as “content” and “expressed”. Thus, the bodies (content) produce actions on the dances (expressed) and vice versa and, in an incessant movement of encounters and contaminations, language is established as action, as does Austin’s theory of speech acts (1990), intercessor, among others, of Deleuze & Guattari (1995) and other post-structuralist references of the GPEF.

## Epistemology

Epistemology was the last category identified. Five studies were analyzed to outline this category. The studies are grouped into discussions about PE as an area of knowledge that leads us to epistemological assumptions about the body, dance, and PE. In one line, Buogo & Lara (2011) and Eusse, Almeida & Bracht (2017) identified body culture and dialectical historical materialism that guides one of the critical lines of PE in Brazil. On the other hand, Mendes & Nóbrega (2009), Almeida, Bracht & Ghidetti (2013) and Santiago & Franco (2015) discussed more in depth, in the first two, and more briefly, in the last, on the phenomenology that permeates studies on the body, dance and Brazilian PE curriculum. As philosophies of the subject, these two epistemological currents will take the body as a part of the subject.

In historical materialism, we have a historically and economically determined subject, with dance being a way of materializing the actions of this subject in their purpose and resilience. In



phenomenology, we have a situated and unfinished subject who will turn their incompleteness into the drive of their pulse of living with a view to transcendence. Dance is also located in the field of forms of embodiment of the subject in the exercise towards transcendence. In both, body practices are forms of action and constitution of these subjects (historical and transcendent).

In addition to the classification above, it should be considered that in their efforts to address the relationship between body, dance and PE, the studies analyzed carry out discussions in which dance is only used as an argumentative resource to think about the body and PE. In other words, it was not possible to identify reflections that consider the three objects of interest as entities situated on the same epistemological level. Dance appears as a vehicle for discussing other topics (such as the philosophy of the body and PE), which is why we highlight an absence of theoretical efforts aimed at thinking about a theory of dance in relation to the body and PE, even in the articles which propose to think about it epistemologically.

According to Bachelard (1996) - for whom the understanding of knowledge is crossed by epistemological obstacles -, internal inconsistencies in the processes of knowledge formation may reveal causes of scientific stagnation. In this sense, the positioning of dance as an explanatory support for PE and the body seems to indicate what the author calls "[...] hesitations in the thought that seeks the object" (p. 122), which configure a true obfuscation of what we should know from what "[...] we believe we know clearly" (p.18). Thus, with regard to the epistemological reflection of the relationship between dance, PE and the body, the studies seem to be closer to a pre-scientific spirit, despite substantialism (epistemological obstacle that considers objects of knowledge as substances, valuing, above all, its qualities (Bachelard, 1996). This is due to the views produced on the triad not being aimed at discussing continuities and ruptures, but only seeking to establish links between objects understood as substances that combine to justify themselves philosophically.

In a different way, because not combined with body, we could say that Mattsson & Lundvall (2015) encountered similar findings when they analyzed the position of dance in Swedish educational documents overall from 1962 to 2011. The authors indicate three main discourses emerging from this *corpus*: dance as cultural identity; dance as healthy; and dance as aesthetics, highlighting that the first two are strongly present in the documents. Like in Brazil, dance as a medium of expression, points to: dance as cultural identity (Language), considering the cultural turn identified that oriented Brazilian PE curriculum (Bracht, 2011); dance as an aesthetic discourse which converges for expressing personal (expressions/feelings), experiences (Language and Epistemology categories), and lately closer to gender discussions (Gender category). Although in Brazilian educational documents and dance pedagogical proposals, health is not directly an issue, it appears as a shadow over the PE curriculum in the instrumentalization of the body. Finally, artistic discussions and the recent outcomes from scientific production on contemporary dance practices are very incipient or not present at all.

## Conclusions

We conclude by recognizing that the relationship between body, dance and the PE curriculum was not established as a direct object in the articles mapped in this documentary research.





However, these articles contribute to a better understanding of how the PE curriculum has been appropriating discussions about the body in its intersection with dance.

We discussed the following categories:

Instrumentalization of the body: In this category, it contributes to the exercise of the body in PE classes, reflecting a biological body point of view.

Gender: We highlighted the understanding of body and dance as a social and cultural construction, which can be established as artifacts marked by difference.

Language: Initially identified as incipient and centered on communication and expression, more recent studies point to a convergence of language within the scope of the linguistic turn and theories of Language as action.

Epistemology: Dance was observed as a historical or transcendent bodily practice.

Thus, our analysis, acknowledged as one of the possible interpretations, is based on the conviction that others can be undertaken. The identified studies do not directly undertake the exercise proposed by Spinoza - what the body can do, discussing the materiality of the body as found in dance with contemporary art practices, like in the bodymedia theory. However, some studies, notably the more recent ones in the scope of Language and Gender, began their trajectory towards establishing a convergence of the PE curriculum with other Epistemologies and distancing themselves from the pedagogical perspectives of Instrumentalization of the body.

Our study has established convergences that allow us to point to other discussions that are still necessary and possible about the body/dance/PE curriculum, especially when we ascertain that recent discussions about body and dance as an art field are widening pedagogical propositions with/for/by the body.

## Authors contributions

Conceptualization: Adriana de Faria Gehres; Methodology: Adriana de Faria Gehres and Livia Tenorio Brasileiro; Software: N/A; Validation: N/A; Formal analysis: Adriana de Faria Gehres, Livia Tenorio Brasileiro and Fabio Luís Santos Teixeira; Investigation: Adriana de Faria Gehres, Livia Tenorio Brasileiro, Marcos Garcia Neira and Fabio Luís Santos Teixeira; Resources: N/A; Writing – original draft: Adriana de Faria Gehres; Writing – review and editing: Adriana de Faria Gehres and Livia Tenorio Brasileiro; Visualization: Adriana de Faria Gehres, Livia Tenorio Brasileiro, Marcos Garcia Neira and Fabio Luís Santos Teixeira; Supervision: N/A; Project administration: N/A; Funding acquisition: N/A.

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