

THE TRADITIONAL GAMES: EDUCATION AND TEACHING

Os Jogos Tradicionais: educação e ensino

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Abstract

Construction of a research project on the implementation of traditional games in the 1st Cycle of Basic Education. We propose to explain the concept of game, from the point of view of some authors, serving as a motto for the materialization of the theoretical study of the work. For a better understanding of the concept of traditional games, we turned to several authors of reference in this theme, as well as the existing guidelines by the Ministry of Education. The methodology applied in this investigation focuses on the presentation of the design and strategies adopted. We also explain the data collection process, proceed to the characterization of the surveyed subjects, present and discuss the results obtained, ending with a reflection on the entire process developed, namely with regard to the learning and the most significant concepts, as well as the difficulties felt throughout the process, providing bibliography that we mobilized to theoretically support our research.

Resumo

Construção de um projeto de investigação sobre a implementação dos jogos tradicionais no 1.º Ciclo do Ensino Básico. Propomo-nos a explicar o conceito de jogo, pela visão de alguns autores, servindo como mote para a concretização do estudo teórico do trabalho. Para uma melhor compreensão do conceito de jogos tradicionais, recorremos a diversos autores de referência nesta temática, bem como as orientações existentes por parte do Ministério da Educação. A metodologia aplicada nesta investigação, centra-se na apresentação do desenho e estratégias adotadas. Explanamos ainda o processo de recolha de dados, procedemos à caracterização dos sujeitos inquiridos, apresentamos e discutimos os resultados obtidos, finalizando com uma reflexão sobre todo o processo desenvolvido, nomeadamente no que concerne às aprendizagens e aos conceitos mais significativos, bem como das dificuldades sentidas no decorrer de todo o processo, disponibilizando bibliografia que mobilizamos para sustentar teoricamente a nossa pesquisa.

Keywords: *Traditional games; Education; Teaching.*

Palavras chave: *Jogos tradicionais; Educação; Ensino.*

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1. GAME CONCEPT

From the perspective of Lopes (2008, p. 18), the game can be understood as “(...) a playful way of communicating with the world and a way of learning to deal with the feelings that arise during its practice”, while that for Júlia (1996), the game has no definition, because whoever plays is looking for pleasure. Over time, the importance of games in education has received several opinions, being remembered as an interesting alternative for solving problems of pedagogical practice. According to Coimbra (2007), the definition of ludic is no longer a simple synonym of play, it has become recognized as an essential trait of human behavior. Hence, the implications of the playful need exceed the boundaries of spontaneous play. The author Huizinga, (2007, p. 33) says that the game is “(...) a voluntary activity or occupation, exercised within certain and determined limits of time and space, according to freely agreed rules”. Considering Borin (2004) who argues that games contribute to the development of reasoning skills such as organization, attention and concentration. In this line of thought, games can be understood as instruments that provide pleasure, fun, entertainment and knowledge building, motivating aspects in the teaching and learning process.

1.1. Traditional games

Considering the research carried out in the context of traditional games, this concept has been extensively studied in recent years, providing us with a good basis for the theoretical support of our work. We begin by quoting Vasconcelos (2008, p. 49) who broadly explains what he understands by traditional games, stating “We call games that predate Modernity “traditional”. From the perspective of Sousa (1997), traditional games can be associated with festivals and popular gatherings, in order to occupy the free time of the population. In this line of thought, we understand traditional games as a form of socialization, assuming that there were variations and similarities in these games from population to population. Therefore, traditional games accompany society throughout history, thus becoming part of the Heritage and History of each country, characterizing the local culture anywhere in the world, at a given time.

Having understood the concept of these games, it is now important to discuss their implementation in schools, which has been requested in the guiding documents for pedagogical practice with students, as we will have the opportunity to explain in the next point.

1.2. Traditional games in schools

Following this work, as we had already mentioned, we intend to explore the importance and relevance of implementing traditional games in schools supervised by the Ministry of Education, with a view to diversifying and enhancing the teaching and learning process, as according to Nova (2009) Traditional games play a “(...) facilitating role in the educational process, either because of their cultural content or because of the role they play as a support for culture and traditions” (p. 20). In this regard, the aforementioned author shares the idea that traditional games, when implemented in the educational community, play a key role in the entire educational process, since they have great potential and expose students to “(...) global, playful and fun situations. concrete, which lead them to solve bodily, temporal and spatial problems, and relationships with each other” (p. 19). Through the aforementioned situations to which students are exposed, they can develop a set of essential skills for their integral development, according to the Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Schooling.

Continuing with our research, we found that traditional games are of a ludic nature, designated as physical-cognitive games or motor and cognitive games. Using these games, we can work on expressive, physical, playful and cognitive skills, facilitating the construction of students' knowledge in the teaching and learning process. Nova (2009) states that each game can be adapted to its players, since they can be “(...) similar, but hardly the same in their rules or ways of playing, for example, with regard to the gibberish used in different games” (p. 21). Therefore, these are worked and promoted as playful and recreational-cultural activities, meeting their target audience, he also states that “(...) playing is a means of social approximations, especially among children, but it can also bring children closer together. generations” (p. 23). Given the transversal character that traditional games confer, their implementation in the educational context crosses different generations, and may culminate in bringing families and educational communities closer together.

After in-depth research into the official documents that guide teaching in Portugal, the Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Schooling and Essential Learning, traditional games are directly associated with different content areas, namely Study of the Environment, Music, Physical Education and Dramatic Expression/Theatre.

Understood the plurality of opportunities that traditional games offer, they can be made flexible with other areas of knowledge that are part of the curriculum. By way of example, we have the possible flexibility with Portuguese, where we can associate traditional games with lengalengas and digraphs, which can be a learning consolidation strategy. In the example of the 1st cycle of Basic Education, the management of the curriculum is the responsibility of the class teacher, allowing the flexibility of the contents, which can and should be enhanced so that the teacher can streamline the greatest number of learnings per moment of “teaching”.

Considering the different conceptions of school, Leite (2003) defines three different concepts of school, the “transmitter”, the “technicalist” and the “socio critical” (p. 146-154). The vast number of traditional games and their implementation in schools depends on the elements, the teaching or non-teaching staff, responsible for their dynamism. Therefore, and relating to traditional games, it is necessary that there is a predisposition of the elements of the teaching staff in order to enhance and make the contents that they have to work more flexible.

2. EMPIRICAL STUDY

2.1. Research design and methodological strategy

The development of this study, through a quantitative approach, intending to know more about the subject under analysis, the implementation of traditional games in schools, from the views of the participants of this study. We frame this work in the interpretative phenomenological paradigm and, given the exploratory nature, the instrument used for the investigation of this work are the structured surveys of teachers of the 1st cycle of Basic Education.

2.2. General objective, specific objectives and starting question

This document, materialized in this project that is now presented, entitled “Traditional Games in the 1st Cycle of E/B”, aims to decode the understanding of the faculty members on the aforementioned theme. In order to carry out this project, we have established two objectives that we intend to achieve through the implementation of this project, which translate into:

- *Understand the implementation of traditional games in pedagogical practice;*
- *Assess which traditional games are applied in their disciplines.*

It is extremely important that both general and specific objectives are as clear and oriented as possible, so that their reading does not generate a conflict of understanding in the work to be developed, in which we are guided on four specific objectives that we aim for catch up: ; *Promote reflection on the use of traditional games in the teaching and learning process; Raising awareness of the importance of traditional games; Identify the number of teachers who resort to traditional games in their teaching and non-teaching practices; Assess the importance of traditional games in the faculty;*

In the sense of all the work carried out, we identified at this moment the starting questions for the development of this study:

- *What is the importance of traditional games in the teaching and learning process?*
- *In which discipline are there a variety of games implemented?*
- *What contents can be worked on using traditional games?*

2.3. Ethical issues

Bearing in mind that ethics is fundamental in the research process, we base our work on the Ethics Charter of the Portuguese Society of Educational Sciences.

2.4. Data collection process

Given the nature of this investigation, and considering the pandemic phase we are experiencing, we chose only one technique for collecting data, which, considering the quantitative aspect of this investigation, is the tool that we favor to find the answer to the starting questions, in which the data collection process is fundamental for the success of an investigative work. First, it collects data more broadly. Once you have found a subject to investigate (...) the scope of data collection narrows” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1994, p. 207).

In this specific case, we privileged the structured survey for a more reflective approach to our research, in which the technique used for data collection is the questionnaire survey on printed paper, which was applied to a certain group of teachers from the 1st Cycle of Basic Education, who work in the public network of this context.

The questionnaire survey, according to Quivy and Campenhoudt (1992) represents a data collection technique that allows verifying theoretical hypotheses and analyzing the existing relationships between the hypotheses.

2.5. Characterization of the Research Subject

The survey is carried out among 52 teachers from the 1st Cycle of E/B, who are teaching in the school clusters of Amarante and Penafiel. Initially, we intended to extend the study to more members of the teaching staff, but given the pandemic phase we are going through, not all teachers were willing to participate in this study. As far as respondents are concerned, they are all 1st cycle teachers, predominantly female, with 43 elements. As for the male gender, we have the presence of 9 elements.

3. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

In these games, the concern with the technical aspects is not dominant, but with the product of their activity, allowing prior agreement between the players in relation to the type of scoring, the materials used, details allowed or prohibited. According to Nova (2009), he defends the use of traditional games in the teaching and learning process, as each game can be adapted to the needs and objectives of each one. In this way, and based on the highlighted author, it was important for us to try to decode, in the third question of the questionnaire, whether our respondents considered traditional games important in the teaching and learning process.

Based on the result of the investigation, a large percentage of respondents, around 94%, recognize the relevance of traditional games in the development of pedagogical practices. Of the 49 affirmative answers, only 32 justified their choice. And, in a global way, we collected information that the importance of traditional games in the teaching and learning process is directly related to the playful issue and the need to renew the methodologies adopted.

Although most of the teachers who responded to the survey consider that traditional games are important, the truth is that only 25 of the inquired elements integrate them into their classes, as was observed, that is, it is more the pedagogical practices that do not contemplate these ludic games than the ones they contemplate.

Regardless of the answers related to the importance and implementation of traditional games, we wanted to call our respondents to reflection and, who knows, make them consider the traditional games that could work in each component of the curriculum.

On the question about the recurrence of traditional games in the process of teaching and learning mathematics, based on the data collected, we can conclude that the vast majority of teachers do not resort to traditional games for teaching mathematics. Of the 52 respondents, only 15 resort to this form of work to plan pedagogical practices. Understanding that Mathematics is one of the most unsuccessful areas, we believe that all teaching possibilities should be explored to enhance learning in this area.

The 15 elements that answered affirmatively to the use of these games in mathematics, still had to answer which games they use the most. The answers did not differ much from each other, and were: Monkey game; Game of hide and seek; Tick game.

In the Portuguese subject, we found that there is a large number of teachers who do not resort to traditional games. However, 21 of the teachers surveyed are able to relate the subject to this playful form of learning.

In Study of the Environment, one of the subjects most associated with the transmission and approach of the tradition of our country, 19 of the teachers answered that they used traditional games in teaching this component.

With regard to Artistic Expression, it should be noted that it includes Musical Expression, Dramatic Expression, Plastic Expression and Dance. As this is a more practical area, where materials are explored, the association with playfulness seems evident, however 100% of respondents do not resort to traditional games for their pedagogical practices.

Regarding the subject of Physical Education, contrary to the results of the implementation of traditional games in educational practices, where only 25 teachers said they used these games, 38 of the 52 teachers said they used these games in the teaching and learning process of Physical Education.

3.1. Traditional games in an educational context (our proposals)

We know that the school is currently undergoing a paradigm shift and, therefore, the need to vary in pedagogical practices is evident. Therefore, as a result of our research work, we prepared two plans, one in the context of Pre-School Education and the other in the 1st Cycle of Basic Education. In the first place, we took the opportunity to make a brief framework of the guiding documents of the pedagogical practices in each context, in order to justify our choices, and then we present each of our work proposals.

3.2. 1st Cycle of Basic Education

The Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Schooling (PA) (Educação, 2018) is a document that aims at the values, skills and principles that students should achieve when they finish their compulsory academic course. As learning guides, values, skills and principles have as their main objective to create a level playing field for all students. Taking into account the different academic paths, family and social lives, this document aims at the integral development of all students. In the PA (2017) we see circumscribed that the desired profile is just a reference and that it does not aim at “(...) any attempt to standardize, but rather to create a reference framework that presupposes freedom, responsibility, appreciation of work, awareness of oneself, family and community insertion and participation in the society that surrounds us” (p. 5).

In this guiding document, which must be worked in conjunction with Essential Learning, the skills under analysis aim at the development of multiple capacities that are intended to serve as a foundation for all students throughout their lives.

For the study of Music, it is important to mention that this is transversal to all areas of competence, however, at this point of work, it is important for us to frame the aforementioned expression in the areas where it receives greater prominence and is directly addressed.

- In the Languages and Texts competence area, students are expected to be able to use codes effectively, adapt languages to different contexts and proficiently master the ability to understand and express themselves in different modes of communication;
- In Interpersonal Relationships, the aim is cooperation, sharing, collaboration, competition, teamwork and proper interaction in relationships with others;
- With regard to Aesthetic and Artistic Sensitivity, it is one of the areas of competence in which Musical Expression best fits, since it is intended that students have the opportunity to recognize different cultural manifestations, to experiment and appreciate different forms of art and to appreciation of art as a form of heritage in society.

Essential Learning (AE), corroborated for basic education by Order No. 6944-A/2018, of July 19, and for Secondary Education (Scientific-Humanistic Courses) by Order No. 8476-A/2018, of August 31, display domains in which knowledge, ability and attitudes are integrated, for each school year and subject area. The indispensable disciplinary knowledge contents are also explained, as well as the cognitive processes that must be activated to acquire this knowledge and even the know-how associated with it, in a given respective cycle and, in its continuity, and vertical articulation (Roldão et al., 2017). In conjunction with the Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Schooling (PA), approved by Dispatch No. 6478/2017, of July 26, strategic teaching actions oriented towards the PA are suggested, offering examples of diverse operationalization and listing There are also descriptors that refer to the competences foreseen therein. As an element of the Curriculum Framework, Essential Learning, as mentioned by the authors, Roldão, Peralta, Martins (2017, p. 10), (...) should be characterized: (a) by the richness and solidity of the contents - the indispensable and core for the meaningful construction of knowledge specific to each discipline; and (b) the richness of the cognitive and practical processes to be developed in students for the acquisition of this knowledge.

With regard to the subjects worked on in the 1st Cycle of Basic Education, the guiding documents mentioned above explain the purpose of teaching them. Emphasizing respect for the principles of equity and quality and relevant and sustainable learning for all students.

Contributing to critical citizenship and active participation in society, with a sense of autonomy and collaboration, freedom and responsibility.

Through sound production, singing, playing, composing, watching, dialoguing, children and young people build meaning, share and transform it, thus enriching their practice and cultural vision is consistent with the different skill areas of the Profile of Students Leaving Compulsory Schooling (PA).

With regard to the Organization of Essential Learning in the area of music, for the 1st Cycle of Basic Education, these were structured around three domains, which are common to Arts Education. Which are they, the domain of experimentation and creation, of interpretation and communication and of appropriation and reflection.

With a view to the transversality of the areas of knowledge, the curriculum of Music was combined with that of Artistic Education, as it provides the articulation between contexts and competences of different expressions.

Through Artistic Education, according to Condessa (2006, p. 39) “(...) the development of the child's potential to: imagine and create, have an aesthetic sense, develop perceptive-motor and playful capacities, communicate with others”.

Artistic expressions, for many years, were not seen as areas of great importance for the development of the child. After several studies and investigations, it began to be given greater relevance. According to Spodek and Brown “Forms of expression, such as art and dramatic play, came to be considered important in children's lives. These activities provided a catharsis, thus allowing children to free themselves from fears, anxieties and hostilities” (2010, p. 203).

Our proposed activity for the 1st Cycle of Basic Education, which consists of planning within the scope of Musical Expression.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The recognition of this type of activity as a strategy in the teaching and learning process covers all components of the curriculum, since its approach allows for a wide flexibility of the different contents.

With regard to the importance attributed to traditional games by the respondents in our investigation, the vast majority considers that these games are relevant in the teaching and learning process. However, with regard to the implementation of these games in an educational context, the number of respondents who implement them is much lower than we initially expected, since only 25 of those questioned responded affirmatively to the use of this methodology in their practices.

Despite the few uses of traditional games in the teaching and learning process, the games pointed out by the teachers seemed quite diversified to us, which represents different learning opportunities.

The implementation of these games in schools is an added value, as it will allow the teacher to teach dynamically, and with this, the student to learn more easily. However, the teacher has a fundamental role, as he must streamline and recreate the games, that is, be creative in order to gain students' attention and meet their pedagogical objectives.

We also remember that the school occupies a large amount of time in the children's schedule and then there is a need to think about children and as children, understanding how the dynamics carried out in the classroom provide them with a greater contribution to the construction of knowledge significant.

It should be noted that, more than adopting and implementing a teaching method in the classroom, it is necessary for teachers to know and analyze the context in which they are inserted, thus being able to adapt these methodologies to their educational purposes and objectives. We know that the school is going through a paradigm shift, trying to keep up with changes in society, and the use of different forms of teaching can be considered essential tools to help in this process of change, helping to overcome the possible difficulties experienced by teachers, students and the educational community.

We highlighted the need to think of the school as an evolving process and considering different teaching strategies will only make it richer, more complete, comprehensive and bring it closer to its target audience. The school is “made” with the community and, therefore, we must think of a school that meets all those who attend and are part of it. We also share the idea that essential learning goes far beyond what the school manuals say, the school is made of people for people (DL 54/2018).

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