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Historical-Critical Pedagogy: Reverberations in Brazilian Physical Education

A Pedagogia Histórico-Crítica: reverberações na Educação Física Brasileira

La Pedagogía Histórico-Crítica: reverberaciones en la Educación Física brasileña

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How to cite: ALMEIDA, E. M. De; MARTINELI, T. A. P. A Pedagogia Histórico-Crítica: reverberações na Educação Física Brasileira. *Revista Diálogo Educacional*, Curitiba, PUCPRESS, v. 26, n. 88, p. 278-293, jan./mar. 2026. <https://doi.org/10.7213/1981-416X.26.088.DS11EN>

Abstract

This article aims to present and analyze the contributions of historical-critical pedagogy to physical education and its impacts on curricular policies over recent decades. The study is based on a bibliographic and documentary analysis, grounded in historical materialism as the method of analysis. The findings indicate that Historical-Critical Pedagogy has impacted Brazilian physical education, particularly with regard to the development of the critical-emancipatory methodological conception of physical education, as well as the formulation of curricular policies whose guidelines are informed by this theoretical perspective, especially in the state of Paraná. In conclusion, four decades after the formulation of Historical-Critical Pedagogy,

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its contributions to advancements in physical education teaching can be affirmed, especially in relation to the education of the working class.

Keywords: Historical-Critical Pedagogy. Physical Education. Education. Curricular Policies. Critical-Emancipatory Conception.

Resumo

O objetivo deste artigo é apresentar e analisar as contribuições da pedagogia histórico-crítica para a educação física e seus impactos nas políticas curriculares ao longo das últimas décadas. Tratou-se de um estudo bibliográfico e documental, tendo como método de análise o materialismo histórico. Os resultados alcançados na trajetória da pesquisa evidenciam os impactos da pedagogia histórico-crítica na educação física brasileira, tanto no que diz respeito à elaboração da concepção metodológica crítico-superadora de educação física, quanto às políticas curriculares cujas orientações estão pautadas nesta abordagem, em particular no estado do Paraná. A título de conclusão, após 40 anos da elaboração da Pedagogia Histórico-Crítica, é possível afirmar suas contribuições para avanços no ensino da educação física, especialmente da classe trabalhadora.

Palavras-chave: Pedagogia Histórico-Crítica. Educação Física. Educação. Políticas Curriculares. Concepção Crítico-Superadora.

Resumen

Este artículo tiene como objetivo presentar y analizar las contribuciones de la pedagogía histórico-crítica a la educación física, así como sus impactos en las políticas curriculares a lo largo de las últimas décadas. El estudio se basa en un análisis bibliográfico y documental, fundamentado en el materialismo histórico como marco metodológico. Los hallazgos indican que la Pedagogía Histórico-Crítica ha influido en la educación física brasileña, particularmente en lo que respecta al desarrollo de la concepción metodológica crítico-emancipadora de la educación física, así como a la formulación de políticas curriculares cuyas orientaciones se sustentan en esta perspectiva teórica, especialmente en el estado de Paraná. En conclusión, cuatro décadas después de la formulación de la Pedagogía Histórico-Crítica, es posible afirmar sus contribuciones a los avances en la enseñanza de la educación física, especialmente en relación con la formación de la clase trabajadora..

Palabras clave: *Pedagogía Histórico-Crítica. Educación Física. Educación. Políticas Curriculares. Concepción Crítico-Emancipadora.*

1. Introduction

The historical-critical pedagogy is a landmark in Brazilian education, establishing itself as a counter-hegemonic pedagogy that critiques neoliberal ideology. It was developed during a dark period in Brazilian politics, namely the Military Dictatorship, which became a major obstacle to the development of a democratic and critical society in the country.

The historical necessity that emerged was the rupture with the dictatorial regime in Brazil, which had its genesis in the early 1960s, more precisely in 1964. Referred to as the years of lead, torture and extermination were instruments of regulation during this time, in which “[t]he generals who ordered, encouraged, and defended torture led the Brazilian Armed Forces to the greatest disaster in their history. Torture became a subject of instruction and routine practice within the military machine of political repression of the dictatorship” (Gaspari, 2002, p. 17).

With the unprecedented crisis in the Brazilian economy and politics, the dictatorial model fell into decline amidst organized movements that literally cried out for change and echoed throughout the national territory. With the fall of other dictatorships in Latin America, a democratic moment began in Brazil, through a process of struggles and resistance, in which the need to break with the technocratic model of education emerged.

Dermeval Saviani (1987), influenced by critical pedagogies developed in different countries, and positioning himself within the movement of critical analysis of reproductionist and neoconservative pedagogies, elaborated the foundations of historical-critical pedagogy. This pedagogy had a great impact in the country, initially disseminated at national conferences, and later, during Brazil’s redemocratization process, it achieved significant influence on Brazilian educational policy. It was widely promoted, leading to curricular, methodological, and pedagogical reforms in Brazilian education.

According to Zanella (2003, p. 39), historical-critical pedagogy,

[...] formulated by Dermeval Saviani (1994, 1997), is a Marxist pedagogy. This pedagogy is based on the premise that the dominated will not liberate themselves unless they come to master what the dominator masters; that is, the dominated must have access to knowledge grounded in the sciences and philosophies (content). Here, the dominated refers to the working class. Without an understanding of social class from a Marxist perspective, it is not possible to be a teacher from the standpoint of the philosophy of praxis. (...) To work within historical-critical pedagogy, therefore, it is not enough to simply follow the five steps as proposed by Saviani: initial social practice, problematization, instrumentalization, catharsis, and final social practice. Beyond these steps, a certain knowledge of the theoretical-methodological presuppositions of Marxism is necessary. Without this knowledge, one runs the risk of veering into eclecticism or of practicing a pedagogy of mere activism.

This is the historical ground and thematic focus that guided the elaboration of this manuscript, with its main emphasis on physical education, which is a mandatory curricular component of basic education as expressed in the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law, n. 9.394/1996, (LDB) (Brazil, 1996).

Physical education, an area of knowledge that has been constituted in Brazilian education since the end of the 19th century, gained ground through the influence of European gymnastics methods. From a utilitarian educational perspective, focusing on the maintenance of bodily health, racial hygiene, and moral education, physical education was founded on a biologicistic theory, with a hygienist and eugenic approach.

During the Military Dictatorship (1964-1985), education served as an ideological instrument, and the ideology underpinning physical education teaching in the country was a eugenic project. This project began between the 19th and 20th centuries and became established during this period, aiming to construct a new model of the citizen. It sought, through the whitening of the population, a change in society that would represent the elite of the time (Beltrami, 2006). Tied to this conception, physical education also possessed a hygienist approach, as it was fundamentally grounded in medical and biological knowledge, which justified the importance of hygienism for national education. From this perspective, teaching consisted of personal hygiene, gymnastic exercises, dance, and clothing recommendations, among other things. Thus, physical education was directed towards the country’s elite and acted towards the improvement of Brazilians, through the acquisition of new ways of being, acting, and establishing social relations (Beltrami, 2006).

In this context, in 1969, through Decree-Law No. 705 (Brazil, 1969), physical education became mandatory at all educational levels, with a predominance of sports in higher education.

Still during the dictatorial period, Decree No. 69.450 of 1971 regulated article 22 of Law 4.024 of 1961, and decreed that: “Physical education, an activity which, through its means, processes, and techniques, awakens, develops, and enhances the physical, moral, civic, psychological, and social forces of the student, constitutes one of the basic factors for achieving the objectives of national education” (Brazil, 1971, Art. 1), among other provisions that reinforced the project of citizenship during this period.

The intense struggles and resistance that led to the fall of the Military Dictatorship in Brazil gave rise to a democratic process. Within this context, the renovating movement in physical education manifested itself, accompanying the wider debates on Brazilian education.

In the 1980s, a group of scholars in the field of physical education, driven by the urgency for profound changes in their paradigms, developed different pedagogical and methodological conceptions for teaching in school education. The need placed on the agenda was the overcoming of the mechanism of positivistic biologicistic thinking, which was predominant in the historiography, in the pedagogical and methodological discussions of physical education, and in the pedagogical practice influenced by such thinking. The challenge became the search for new perspectives for understanding reality. The critiques, already present since the late 1970s and early 1980s, elaborated by Carmo (1982), Medina (1983; 1987), Oliveira (1983; 1985), among others, began to gain reinforcement, mainly in the writings of Castellani Filho (1988; 1993; 1997), Bracht (1992; 1997), and Taffarel (1993).

This historical moment was considered one of crisis for physical education, prompting an effort to answer the question that emerged from this crisis, i.e., “What is Physical Education?” As Soares et al. (1992, p. 25) explain, a pedagogy enters this condition when

[...] its explanations of social practice no longer convince subjects from different classes and no longer respond to their interests. In this crisis, other pedagogical explanations are being elaborated to achieve consensus (convincing) among subjects, configuring the emerging pedagogies, those in the process of development, whose reflection is linked to the construction or maintenance of a hegemony.

In this context of crisis, several researchers dedicated themselves to producing pedagogical conceptions based on different theoretical frameworks, such as phenomenology, historical materialism, constructivism, critical theory, and post-critical theory, among others. From the end of the Military Dictatorship to the present day, some pedagogical conceptions have become established, such as: the humanist conception, by Vitor Marinho de Oliveira; the developmentalist conception, by Go Tani; the constructivist conception, by João Batista Freire; the systemic conception, by Mauro Betti; the phenomenological conception, by Wagner Moreira; the open teaching conception, by Reiner Hildebrandt-Stramann; the cultural conception, by Jocimar Daolio; the sociological conception, by Valter Bracht; the critical-emancipatory conception, by Elenor Kunz; the critical-overcoming conception, by the Authors’ Collective; the renewed health conception, by Dartagnan Pinto Guedes; and the cultural conception, by Marcos Garcia Neira (Martineli; Mileski, 2017; Badaró et al., 2023). These pedagogical approaches to physical education, constituted on the basis of distinct theoretical-philosophical perspectives, imply different ways of conceiving the human being and their development.

Drawing on historical materialism and historical-critical pedagogy, the critical-overcoming approach (Soares et al., 1992) introduced a critical framework to the field of physical education. Characterized by its authors as emergent, this approach seeks to apprehend specific class interests.

The relevance of analyzing physical education specifically is justified by the call to examine education over the last four decades in light of counter-hegemonic struggles inspired by historical-critical pedagogy, given that physical education has been influenced by this pedagogy from the 1980s to the present.

The objective of this article is to present and analyze the contributions of historical-critical pedagogy to Brazilian physical education and its impacts on curriculum policies over the past decades. Regarding methodological

aspects, this study is theoretical in nature, adopting a qualitative approach. Its technical procedures involved bibliographic and documentary research, drawing on previously elaborated materials, mainly books and scientific articles, original documents, and primary sources. Thus, the central references of the study were the original productions of Dermeval Saviani, as a starting point, productions in physical education, especially the book *Metodologia do Ensino de Educação Física*, as well as Brazilian educational documents and, particularly, documents from the State of Paraná, such as the *Currículo Básico para as escolas públicas* (Paraná, 1990), *Diretrizes Curriculares do Estado do Paraná* (Paraná, 2008), and *Referencial Curricular do Paraná: princípios, direitos e orientações* (Paraná, 2018), to conduct an analysis of reality in its particularities. The documents selected as sources for this study were chosen intentionally, based on the understanding that these particular curricular propositions, though other documents exist, underpinned both the curricular organization of school institutions in the state of Paraná and, concomitantly, the practice of teachers working within this educational network.

The study followed a historical perspective of analyzing reality and its connections with the totality of social relations, based on the understanding that it is necessary to seek the origin, structure, and dynamics of the object in order to develop reflections that reveal its essence (Paulo-Netto, 2011). To this end, identifying the singularity, particularity, and universality of the object constitutes a fundamental methodological presupposition enabling reflections that articulate the object with the historical totality in which it is inserted. The analytical categories mobilized from historical-dialectical materialism were the correlation between historical-critical pedagogy and the critical-overcoming conception, as well as the influence of these pedagogies on educational policy in the State of Paraná, the syntheses of which are presented in the following topics.

2. Methodological and pedagogical impacts of historical-critical pedagogy on physical education

In the field of physical education, the classic book *Metodologia do Ensino da Educação Física*, developed by a group of Brazilian researchers in the 1990s, sought to discuss theoretical-methodological issues in the area from a revolutionary perspective. Thus, the proposal presented in the book started from a class perspective, and the teaching it advocates is based on three characteristics, namely: 1) diagnostic, as it reads and interprets reality; 2) judicative, as it judges based on the interests of the working class; and 3) teleological, as it has an objective and a direction towards the transformation of reality.

This book sought to oppose the physical fitness perspective, upon which physical education teaching in schools was founded. To overcome this conception of teaching, the critical-overcoming conception was created. It was developed by several researchers, known in the field as a collective of authors—Valter Bracht, Lino Castellani Filho, Celi Taffarel, Carmen Lúcia Soares, Elizabeth Varjal, and Micheli Escobar. As it was a collective work, it is possible to observe that the authors also studied and researched distinct theoretical perspectives, which generated problems and ambiguity in the text (Silva; Silva, 2023).

In view of this, Furtado and Andrade (2024) assert that it is necessary to differentiate the book by the Authors' Collective from the critical-overcoming conception, as the book was produced by a group of researchers who held distinct epistemological conceptions, who came together to develop a proposition for teaching physical education, and it was a production marked by disputes over arguments and personal positions, which resulted in various incoherences and misunderstandings in the text. On the other hand, the critical-overcoming conception remains alive in school and university life, being the object of study for various research groups and researchers who, through a critical analysis of the initial proposal and theoretical deepening in light of Marxism, expand discussions and studies of this pedagogical conception. These reverberations in Brazilian physical education can be identified in the studies of Celi Taffarel, Joelma Albuquerque, Tiago Lavoura, Leonardo Andrade, Juarez Sampaio, Flávio Melo, Cláudio Lira, Caroline Pichetti Nascimento, and others who are now recognized as the leading researchers on this theme.

As previously stated, the book was subject to criticism for claiming to adopt a critical perspective and to position itself from a class standpoint, that of the working class, while presenting several misconceptions and concepts such as the defense of a democratic school, or the overcoming of individualism through solidarity values. These are insufficient for overcoming the fundamental principles of the prevailing model of education, nor do they contribute to an education grounded in the historical knowledge accumulated by humanity that enables students to identify themselves as both products and producers of human history, as well as to understand the social contradictions to which they are subjected (Barbieri, 2010).

The concept of corporeal materiality as socially produced, present in the book, is rejected by Silva (2024) on the understanding that knowledge related to bodily activities is not constructed through the act of producing the means of life and bodily organization. On the contrary, it is the level of development and the material conditions of production of the means of life that enable the development of individuals' bodily organization and materiality.

Mello (2009) highlights that gestures were once used as forms of communication, but the need to improve communication through the development of the speech apparatus and the creation of written language led gestures to acquire other and new forms of utility directed toward other aspects beyond communication, such as art and its forms of representation through mime and dance, in the current form of the development of productive forces and material conditions.

Similarly, the sports activities that exist today once served other social needs, in other historical moments, with other material conditions of production. Throwing, running, and jumping, for example, functioned to meet needs produced by humans such as hunting, fleeing, slaughtering animals to satisfy hunger, among others; they also later became part of training for physical and military preparation at another time, when humanity's material and social production conditions enabled new ways of obtaining food and defending against other groups. And today, in capitalist society, physical and bodily activities manifest as commodities, which act towards health maintenance, as art, and as sporting and playful manifestations (Mello, 2009).

Thus, as Furtado and Andrade (2024) highlight, the critical-overcoming approach had its genesis in the proposition put forward by the authors' collective, and since publication, many theorists, researchers, and teachers have dedicated themselves to understanding the theoretical-methodological foundations of Marxism, historical-cultural psychology, and historical-critical pedagogy as presented in the initial proposition; through a process of overcoming by incorporation, the articulations between the critical-overcoming conception and historical-critical pedagogy have been expanded, and the didactic-pedagogical treatment of teaching the elements that constitute body culture has been refined.

Body culture was defined in the Collective's book as the area of knowledge that pedagogically addresses content such as games, gymnastics, fights, acrobatics, mime, sport, among others (Soares et al., 1992). Subsequently, Taffarel and Escobar (2009, p. 3) revisited the concept of body culture and defined it as follows:

[...] it is the phenomenon of practices whose general or primordial connection—the essence of the object and the internal nexus of its properties that determines its content and structure as a totality—is given by the materialization, in the form of activities—whether creative or imitative—of the multiple relations of ideological, political, philosophical, and other experiences, subordinated to historical-social laws. The general characteristic of these activities is that they are valued in themselves; their non-material product is inseparable from the act of production and receives from man a particular use value for attending to his playful, aesthetic, artistic, agonistic, competitive, and other senses related to his reality and motivations. They are realized through socially elaborated models that carry the ideal meanings of the objective world, of its properties, nexuses, and relations discovered by joint social practice.

Teixeira (2018, pp. 49-50), in turn, establishes the following synthesis regarding body culture:

[...] Body Culture is the set of human activities that emerge, historically, from the social relations of labor. These activities are effected through actions and operations that seek to satisfy first-order human needs or those related to them. Throughout the development of the human genus, they assume a relative autonomy in relation to the

labor process, as they come to be oriented by other meanings and senses not necessarily directly linked to the productive process of human life. In social reproduction, they seek to satisfy other exigencies, no less important, that contribute to the process of humanization of being, and are generally valued in themselves.

They are characterized by involving conscious actions and operations oriented by social motives, whether arising from competition, exercise, agonism, sublimation, play, aesthetics, rhythmic expression, and so many others that emerge in the course of the historical process. Indeed, the motives of Body Culture activities are subject to the determinations of the material conditions of existence (way of life); however, in this process, there will always be a motive that assumes the function of predominant moment, guiding the activity in a given direction. In class society, its socialization is restricted, as it assumes the form of a commodity, imposing a limited education on the majority of the population who cannot pay for access, thus preventing the full development of the multiple potentialities of social being. The school teaching of these activities necessarily involves the appropriation of the foundations (technical-objectal, axiological, and normative/judicative) of these human activities, where it is possible to establish a conscious relationship with Body Culture.

Thus, physical education is understood as a predominantly practical human activity, complexified, refined, and enhanced socially and historically in the process of human development spontaneously, on one hand, and within concrete and objective conditions, on the other hand. As a curricular component, Lavoura (2020) states that the conception of physical education elaborated by the critical-overcoming approach is built on scientific foundations and is based on three levels, namely: the philosophical-methodological dimension, which produces a theoretical system regarding the conception of physical education; the pedagogical theory dimension, whose theoretical basis of approach, educational and pedagogical, takes into account the knowledge to be taught; and the pedagogical practice dimension, which involves the teaching and learning process, the processes of mediation, and the logic of student learning and development.

Physical education is defined by Soares et al. (1992, p. 41) as a pedagogical practice, in school, that involves diverse forms of bodily activity, with the aim of “apprehending bodily expression as language.” This statement was later rejected by Escobar (2012, p. 129), who explains: “The study of Physical Education aims to apprehend bodily expression as language. No!!! This is a mistake, a mistake. Because we were still somewhat impregnated with the vision coming from Kant’s idealism and German thought about bodily activities.”

This occurred due to the worldwide movement encouraging the adherence to the phenomenological perspective in the educational field. This theory was born by capital’s order to explain society from a perspective “that clings to everyday life and explains man’s practice from his micro-universe. It is a conception that is founded, mainly, on the interpretative capacity of the researcher himself” (Escobar, 2012, p. 207). Escobar (2012, p. 208) justifies that this movement caused the group that elaborated the book to fall “into the trap of ‘languages’” and to affirm that bodily activities are forms of language. Furthermore, according to the author:

It was after this that we realized there was nothing of bodily expression in the activities of this cultural area, because if you look at a game, the person playing, the player, is not expressing anything, they are not transmitting anything outward, as they are constructing something that they are simultaneously consuming. The game involves them, concerns them through the very subjectivity of the activity and its implicit objective. That is to say, it is the player themselves who simultaneously produces and consumes what they are producing. And we had not paid attention to this (Escobar, 2012, p. 209).

This is the nature of physical education, which, as a human activity, becomes non-material labor whose product is not separated from the act of production while its specificity is constituted in the transmission and assimilation of knowledge that is specific to it and, together with the other disciplines that make up the curriculum, contributes to the production and individual development of students (Lavoura, 2020).

The elements that constitute body culture are endowed with objective meanings; thus, they are not chosen by individuals, but rather endowed with objective significance from concrete reality, from their world and their

motivations. In this way, the activities that comprise body culture possess sense and meaning that involve human objectives and social intentionalities; that is, physical and bodily activities have a relationship and interdependence with social and political problems (Soares et al., 1992).

School contents are understood by the collective as “knowledge necessary for the apprehension of the socio-historical development of bodily activities themselves and for the explication of their objective meanings” (Soares et al., 1992, p. 43). They are the result of cultural and universal elements, produced and incorporated by humanity throughout history, and their inclusion as school contents aims at the pedagogical reflection of this cultural heritage expressed in physical education through games, play, dances, fights, gymnastic exercises, sports, juggling, contortion, mime, and others.

According to Nascimento (2014), bodily movements, although they are a constituent part, are not the essence of the activities that comprise body culture, since their constitution is based on the social practice in which they were and are inserted; therefore, their essence is historical. The essence of body culture instead resides in two elements: practical-utilitarian needs and ludic and artistic needs, which were fundamental for the production of body culture activities in diverse material, social, and political conditions.

Based on this understanding and on the historical-cultural study and analysis of body culture activities, Nascimento (2014) identifies three objects that guide teaching in this area of knowledge: the creation of an artistic image, encompassing dance, circus activities, and mime, insofar as these forms emerge from either liturgical or profane contexts; the control of another’s action, involving opposition and mutually antagonistic objectives as exemplified by sports; and the mastery of one’s own action, referring to bodily activities that demand dexterity and skill in task execution, such as athletics and gymnastics.

For Lavoura (2020), the contents of physical education are socially and culturally determined and instituted human activities and, therefore, are subject to historical, political, economic, and ideological influences, depending on the context in which they were created and developed throughout human history. Thus, the apprehension of systematized knowledge, through the reproduction of real movement in the sphere of thought, causes singular changes in individuals and enhances their development as a human genus.

The teaching process in the Authors’ Collective book approximates the concept of the Historical-Cultural Theory of teaching cycles, since it starts from theoretical and scientific thought and attempts to organize it in accordance with levels of scientific concept, from syncretism to thought subsidized by the system of concepts.

Costa, Miranda, and Lavoura (2016) affirm that the task of physical education in school is the transmission of scientific concepts. However, this objective is sometimes denied by a hegemonic conception that understands its specificity exclusively through practical activity and for human movement. For Lavoura (2020), although physical education emphasizes practice, it should not limit itself to practicism, but rather promote reflection on the knowledge that involves its contents, so that students are led to reproduce the essential features of knowledge and to know the essence of the object, through the negation and overcoming of its appearance.

The formation of the scientific concept occurs through generalizations, from the most elementary to the most complex. Thus, through theoretical reflection, the student appropriates the capacity to abstract, organizes and systematizes knowledge, in order to ideally reproduce the essential features of the object of study (Lavoura, 2020).

Taffarel (2016, p. 9) affirms that the promotion of theoretical thinking in the educational process “is a sine qua non condition for understanding the human dimensions contained in its diverse activities.” In this way, theoretical thinking enables the understanding of objects and phenomena of reality as an integral part of the historical process and products of the satisfaction of human needs.

Taffarel (2016) argues that the critical-overcoming teaching methodology is grounded in historical-cultural theory and historical-critical pedagogical theory, which are based on a methodological proposal guided by classical knowledge, whose purpose is to promote the apprehension of concrete reality in thought, with a view to transforming and mastering it, through the instruments of thought and research. Similarly, Lavoura (2020) highlights that social

practice, conceived as human-generic practice produced throughout history, which constitutes both the starting point and the point of arrival of historical-critical pedagogy, enriches the critical-overcoming methodology and enhances the creation of conditions for the selection, systematization, and transmission of the contents and knowledge specific to physical education to be appropriated by students.

3. Impacts on educational policy for the field of physical education: the case of the state of Paraná

To understand the influences of historical-critical pedagogy and the critical-overcoming conception on the educational and curricular policies of the state of Paraná, a study of their main propositions was carried out. In this process, it was possible to verify that, in this state, the impacts of these pedagogical propositions occurred after the end of the Military Dictatorship. Following the political opening and intending to overcome the technicist conception of education, the Government of the State of Paraná adopted, at the discursive level, the presuppositions of historical-critical pedagogy, specifically the theoretical-methodological framework of Dermeval Saviani (Baczinski, 2007).

Thus, based on a descriptive-analytical approach, an analysis was conducted of the main educational and curricular documents produced in Paraná after the Military Dictatorship, namely: the *Currículo Básico para as escolas públicas* (Paraná, 1990), the *Diretrizes Curriculares do Estado do Paraná* (Paraná, 2008), and the *Referencial Curricular do Paraná: princípios, direitos e orientações* (Paraná, 2018), seeking to identify the elements of historical-critical pedagogy and the critical-overcoming conception present in the documents, as well as to indicate the role that these conceptions played in the historical period in which they were used, as presented below.

3.1 Currículo Básico para as escolas públicas

The *Currículo Básico para as escolas públicas do Paraná* marks a shift in educational perspective, as a result of the political changes that occurred after the end of the Military Dictatorship. This document highlights the importance of apprehending the historical *raison d'être* of the school and its task of teaching systematized knowledge and scientific knowledge, drawing on the contributions of Dermeval Saviani. It therefore becomes necessary to provide conditions for students to appropriate school knowledge, which requires that the organization of such knowledge be based on a specific form of teaching and intervention.

Based on the presuppositions previously outlined for historical-critical pedagogy, it is essential to consider that the social agents present in the teaching-learning relationship are subjects who are inserted and socially determined. That is, the teacher and students are inserted in the same global social practice, although they occupy differentiated functions relative to the pedagogical process. The teacher's understanding, presumably, must be more articulated than that of the student; that is, they must hold a more organic reading of the social practice in which both they and the student are inserted. However, this understanding of the teacher is not finished and ready, as they continue to be challenged by new knowledge and experiences, including those linked to teaching. The teacher's reading of the students' understanding of social practice, at the moment prior to the beginning of pedagogical work, is precarious. They gradually incorporate new elements into it through contact with the students and through the consequent evaluation of the actions undertaken towards teaching.

The students' understanding of social practice does not presuppose, at least at the beginning of the teaching process, the elements determined by it. If they possessed them, they would not be in the condition of students, which does not imply disregarding that they hold knowledge and experiences that the teacher must consider in their work. Based on this teaching, students should incorporate new knowledge and experiences to gradually expand, deepen, and articulate their understanding of social practice.

From instrumentalization, from the mastery of cultural tools, that is, from the incorporation of a set of basic notions related to the areas of knowledge, it is important to follow the elaboration that students begin to carry out based

on such mastery. The monitoring of students' elaboration, of how they use the new knowledge apprehended in explaining the phenomena of social practice, should be taken as a reference for the organization of teaching more complex notions (Paraná, 1990, p. 15-16).

The continuous process of learning and the organization of school knowledge are inseparable dimensions in school evaluation. Thus, evaluating the degree of mastery, on the part of students, of the notions taught in each area of knowledge aims to review school knowledge and the teacher's pedagogical conduct. In light of student learning outcomes, the teacher can question their didactics and conduct of the teaching process, using evaluation as a guide for their pedagogical decisions. "The great challenge is to teach well; to order and reorder teaching and the daily life of the school and the teacher" (Paraná, 1990, p. 16).

The presentation of this synthesis of the pedagogical elements that constitute historical-critical pedagogy in the Paraná curriculum evidences a position, albeit discursive, of the theoretical perspective adopted in the State, since the document reinforces that the purpose of this presentation is to indicate to teachers the need for mediation so that students can appropriate cultural tools.

The aforementioned Curriculum highlights the influence of historical-critical pedagogy on Paraná's educational policy in the conception of education. Bacinski (2007) affirms that the appropriation of historical-critical pedagogy in Paraná's curricular policy occurred discursively, with the objective of "boycotting a social revolution, which could be realized through the socialization of knowledge," especially because the post-dictatorship period was, on one hand, a period of openness for discussions regarding the valorization of scientific knowledge and education for all, and, on the other hand, it was a period of restructuring of capital and its forms of social reproduction.

The appropriation of historical-critical pedagogy by the state of Paraná was, at the very least, contradictory, since the State, as the political representative of the dominant class, defends the permanence of the capitalist mode of production, which constitutes an impeding factor for the realization of the fundamental pillars of historical-critical pedagogy. Bacinski (2007) affirms that the implementation of historical-critical pedagogy in this curricular policy was authoritarian, with the intention of conveying the idea that state education was being revolutionized; however, this occurred only rhetorically, with few actions for its materialization. Similarly, Orso and Tonidandel (2013) highlight that the insertion of historical-critical pedagogy into the curriculum was not institutionalized, since, although it was present in the schools' Political-Pedagogical Projects and in the discourse of teachers and administrators, its theoretical foundations remained unknown to many of them.

In the *Currículo Básico*, physical education is based "[...] on the Historical-Critical trend in education, a trend assumed by some Physical Education professionals as Progressive, Revolutionary, Critical-Revolutionary Physical Education" (Paraná, 1990, p. 152). From this perspective, human movement is understood as "the objective expression of bodily consciousness, formed from the relations that constitute society and from the knowledge systematized by the dominant class." Thus, the conception of movement proceeds from society, in which the knowledge of physical education was and is produced, so the analysis and reflection of this knowledge should lead to the "re-elaboration of consciousness and body culture" (Paraná, 1990, p. 152).

Therefore, the body in movement being the object of study of physical education, which expresses itself in gymnastics, dance, sports, and games, these contents, in light of the historical-critical perspective, should take into consideration the origin and history of the manifestations in the dynamics of society; the development of the child and their social context (Paraná, 1990).

The education of the body in movement would be based on motor exploration by students, in order to offer conditions that allow them to make discoveries, create new paths, and reach higher levels of knowledge. Furthermore, teaching should promote reflection and analysis of society, recognizing different cultural forms of physical education contents in different societies, expanding the students' world references (Paraná, 1990).

In the area of physical education, one notes an attempt at integration between historical-critical pedagogy and the critical-overcoming perspective, albeit superficially. Fratti (2001) highlights this fragility in the proposition of the conception

of physical education in the document, since an in-depth study of the document indicates the inclusion of distinct scientific productions beyond these critical ones, such as psychomotricity and Human Movement Science. Some of these conceptions, arising from the political and academic effervescence at the end of the Dictatorship, although aimed at overcoming the physical fitness model linked to physical education, held positions distinct from the revolutionary perspectives. Therefore, the proposal for physical education in the *Currículo Básico*, although it was an important milestone for that period, proved fragile for its appropriation and implementation from a critical perspective by teachers.

3.2 Diretrizes Curriculares do Estado do Paraná

In 2008, the *Diretrizes Curriculares do Estado do Paraná* (DCE) were implemented, another significant document that comprised a set of guidelines for Basic Education in the state, during the government of Roberto Requião (PMDB), published to underpin pedagogical work and strengthen public education. The document established principles, rights, and objectives for schools, aiming to form critical and participatory citizens, and guided the various disciplines, such as Art, Biology, Geography, Mathematics, and Physical Education, which served as a basis for curricular organization and the elaboration of political-pedagogical projects in schools in the state of Paraná.

This document proceeds from the conception that the knowledge present in school subjects should contribute to the critique of the economic, political, and social contradictions present in the structure of contemporary societies, in addition to providing “an understanding of scientific production, philosophical reflection, and artistic creation, within the contexts in which they are constituted” (Paraná, 2008, p. 14).

The DCE (Paraná, 2008) advocates for a curriculum based on the artistic, scientific, and philosophical dimensions of knowledge, based on the understanding that both scientific production and artistic manifestations, as well as the philosophical heritage that integrates humanity, considered as dimensions for the curriculum subjects, allow for pedagogical work that is grounded in the direction of the totality of knowledge and its relationship with daily life.

The document revisits the *Currículo Básico*, highlighting its connection to dialectical materialism. The Directive reinforces that: “[...] it sought to maintain the link with the field of critical theories of education and with methodologies that prioritize different ways of teaching, learning, and evaluating. Furthermore, in these guidelines, the conception of knowledge considers its scientific, philosophical, and artistic dimensions, emphasizing the importance of all disciplines” (Paraná, 2008, p. 19).

The school, in this conception, was constituted as a “space for confrontation and dialogue between systematized knowledge and the knowledge of popular daily life. These are the socio-historical sources of knowledge in its complexity” (Paraná, 2008, p. 21). Thus, school contents proceeded from a historical analysis of science, and their socialization and appropriation by students would occur “through critical teaching-learning methodologies” (Paraná, 2008, p. 25).

In the curricular proposition of the DCE, historical-critical pedagogy is expressed superficially. Baczinski, Piton, and Turmena (2008) affirm that, in the DCE, there is no mention of historical-critical pedagogy or the productions of Dermeval Saviani. However, it is possible to identify the presentation of the five steps of the systematization elaborated by Saviani in the discussion of the methodological process that guides teaching. Thus, in teachers’ discourse, the idea appears that the Directive proceed from an emancipatory conception of education, and one also verifies the appropriation of historical-critical pedagogy from its methodological bias, in a reduced and pragmatic manner, without a deepening of its theoretical foundations.

Within the scope of the curriculum guidelines for the discipline of physical education, the technical-pedagogical team for the discipline was composed of: Cíntia Müller Angulski, Claudia Sueli Litz Fugikawa, Fabiano Antônio dos Santos, Felipe Sobczynski Gonçalves, Leisi Fernanda Moya, Luciano de Lacerda Gurski, Mário Cerdeira Fidalgo, and Rodrigo Tramutolo Navarro.

In this document, the conception of physical education present in the *Currículo Básico* is revisited, in which this discipline is grounded in historical-critical pedagogy from a progressive perspective, based on the presuppositions of historical-dialectical materialism. However, by proposing presuppositions related to movement, the document became rigid and aligned more closely with developmentalist, constructivist, and psychomotor perspectives, thereby weakening historical-critical pedagogy. Furthermore, the document presents the critique made by various researchers of the *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais* (PCN), due to the theoretical eclecticism present in the proposal for physical education, and highlights that the object of study and teaching of this area of knowledge is body culture, and, therefore, “Physical Education is inserted in this project by guaranteeing access to knowledge and critical reflection on the innumerable manifestations or bodily practices historically produced by humanity, seeking to contribute to a broader ideal of forming a critical and reflective human being, recognizing themselves as a subject who is a product, but also a historical, political, social, and cultural agent” (Paraná, 2008, p. 49).

The document draws on Michele Escobar to affirm that the genesis of body culture lies in the relationship between humans and nature and in the relationship among human beings. In this trajectory, labor is understood as the foundational category of the human being, and through it, men developed physical skills and aptitudes to overcome obstacles and to survive, producing the manifestations of body culture. Thus, physical education in the DCE seeks to stimulate “reflection on the collection of forms and representations of the world that human beings have produced, externalized through bodily expression in games and play, dances, gymnastics, and sports” (Paraná, 2008, p. 53).

The curriculum guidelines for the discipline of physical education address the historical dimension of the discipline, theoretical-methodological foundations, and articulating elements of the structuring contents for basic education: a) body culture and the body; b) body culture and ludicity; c) body culture and health; d) body culture and the world of work; e) body culture and sportization; f) body culture – technique and tactics; g) body culture and leisure; h) body culture and diversity; i) body culture and media. The structuring contents of physical education are: sports, games and play, gymnastics, fights, and dance.

Regarding the specificity of physical education, it is possible to observe that the conception of body culture underpins this curricular component in the Directive. Furthermore, elements are expressed that reinforce that the conception of physical education is oriented by a critical-overcoming understanding, a conception that is subsidized by Marxism.

Testa (2015) affirms that the conception of physical education in the DCE is supported by the critical-overcoming conception and by historical-critical pedagogy, since the organization of teaching through methodological alternatives proceeds from the students’ prior knowledge, then the problematization of the relations between content and social context is carried out, and finally, the activity is directed toward its main objective.

However, Pigosso (2013) emphasizes that the realization of this conception of physical education in teaching practice still lacked studies that would enable pedagogical practice truly subsidized by a consistent theoretical basis and not by mere methodological strategies.

3.3 Referencial Curricular do Paraná: princípios, direitos e orientações

In 2018, following the promulgation of the *Base Nacional Comum Curricular* (BNCC), the State of Paraná produced the document *Referencial Curricular do Paraná: princípios, direitos e orientações*. In this document, there is a complete distancing between the state curricular policy and historical-critical pedagogy, with regard to the conception of education. It is based on a formation centered on skills and competencies, as advocated by the BNCC.

However, with respect to physical education, it is possible to perceive that the curricular proposal maintains its adherence to the critical-overcoming pedagogical conception, since in the BNCC the object of study of physical education is the body movement culture. In the *Referencial*, the object of study of physical education is body culture, which proceeds from a “meaningful educational project, aiming to guarantee students access to the knowledge historically produced by humanity and culturally developed by different peoples” (Paraná, 2018, p. 339).

From this perspective, the knowledge of physical education is essential “for the understanding of social practice, as well as for a critical, reflective apprehension aimed at overcoming and transforming social contradictions on the part of all those involved in the educational process” (Paraná, 2018, p. 341). Thus, the teaching of physical education aims to establish dialectical relations between the concepts, foundations, and theories and the knowledge of other areas and disciplines.

Martineli, Vasconcelos, and Almeida (2019) affirm that, in the *Referencial*, the conception of physical education differs from what is proposed in the national document – the BNCC – by seeking in the critical-overcoming approach a formation that promotes pedagogical reflection on the heritage historically produced in the different manifestations of body culture.

Although the introductory text of physical education is supported by the critical-overcoming conception, the theoretical and methodological presuppositions of historical-critical pedagogy are not present in the *Referencial Curricular*, since the text of this educational policy offers no theoretical support to subsidize pedagogical practice, so that “the contents and practice grounded in the reality of the school subjects do not transcend daily life, which contributes to losing sight of the scientificity of the curriculum” (Rossetto; Castro, 2022, p. 48).

In the *Referencial Curricular*, physical education restricts bodily practices to the realm of languages and, by focusing on the formation of skills and competencies, limits itself to reflecting on the movement that is executed, to the detriment of the appropriation and conscientization of bodily movements and their modes of expression as a form of pleasure and enjoyment. Furthermore, the document proceeds from a conception that combines critical and post-critical theories, which are contrary to one another, since the former aims at human emancipation for the transformation of reality and the latter seeks transformation in the social and cultural sphere (Brancher, 2022).

The *Referencial*, therefore, although discursively presenting a critical conception, is supported by hegemonic theories, disregards praxis, and fails to enable the formation of scientific concepts. Consequently, it is a curriculum oriented towards an alienated and unilateral formation (Rossetto; Castro, 2022).

Over the last thirty years, curricular proposition in the state of Paraná has evidenced the accessory utilization of critical pedagogical theories and revolutionary perspectives in educational policies, which, however, were constituted more through discourse than through actions that would effectively enable the application of these theories in pedagogical practice. Thus, as Baczinski (2007) and Orso and Tonidandel (2013) highlighted, the utilization of these theories intoxicates the working class, through the possibility of pedagogical changes that will rarely be effected by State initiative, which reproduces the capitalist and neoliberal ideology and offers neither working conditions nor adequate continuing education for teachers.

On the other hand, according to Moreira and Zanardini (2015), the utilization of these theories enables teachers themselves to commit, within the limits of their action, to the transmission and socialization of historically produced knowledge to students. The utilization of pedagogical propositions such as the critical-overcoming conception in physical education allows teachers to fight for the overcoming of the various problems existing in their area of activity, with a view to ensuring the appropriation of scientific concepts and theoretical thinking in their classes.

Final considerations

This article has evidenced that the pedagogical conception denominated critical-overcoming, since its genesis in the book produced by the group entitled Authors’ Collective, has developed and articulated itself with the historical-critical pedagogy of Dermeval Saviani. These two pedagogical propositions have a Marxist basis and aim to promote an emancipatory education for the working class, focusing on the transmission and assimilation of productions historically elaborated by humanity so as to enable students to apprehend scientific concepts and develop theoretical thinking.

In the field of educational policies, specifically in the state of Paraná, it was verified that, after the end of the Military Dictatorship, the government itself chose to utilize historical-critical pedagogy and the critical-overcoming

conception in the proposition for education and physical education in the state curriculum. In the three documents investigated, evidence of the presence of these critical theories was observed. However, because the State is a mechanism that functions in favor of Capital, these insertions of critical theories presented themselves in an essentially discursive manner, without theoretical deepening, in such a way that it did not enable these theories to be executed within the scope of teaching practice.

Thus, the utilization of critical theories offers the idea that education proceeds from a pedagogical perspective focused on students from the working class; however, this pedagogy is not realized due to the limitations that the State itself possesses as a mediator of capitalist ideals. On the other hand, having these theories in policies enables, within the limits of this form of sociability, a means for teaching actions that are emancipatory and that oppose hegemonic conceptions of education, and that promote student appropriation of the scientific knowledge historically produced by humanity.

The contributions of this article to the academic field lie in the possibilities it opens for future research. Such research could deepen investigations into classic and contemporary sources on historical-critical pedagogy in education and physical education. It could also explore the possibilities and potentialities of actions in initial and continuing education to enable both the appropriation of the theoretical and philosophical foundations of pedagogical practices grounded in historical-critical pedagogy and the critical-overcoming conception, and their implementation in school institutions across the country.

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Editor Responsável: Alboni Marisa Dudeque Pianovski Vieira

Recebido/Received: 17.11.2025 / 11.17.2025

Aprovado/Approved: 20.02.2026 / 02.20.2026