

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN TRAINING NORMAL SCHOOL TEACHERS (1897-1921)

*A EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA NA FORMAÇÃO DE PROFESSORES NORMALISTAS (1897-1921)*

*LA EDUCACIÓN FÍSICA EN LA FORMACIÓN DE PROFESORES NORMALISTAS (1897-1921)*

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**Keywords:**

History.  
Gymnastics.  
Teachers.  
Education.

**Abstract:** From the research regarding the Supplementary and Normal School of Piracicaba/SP, the proposition is to comprehend the presence of Physical Education in the training of teachers (1897-1921). Historical sources include legal devices, school principals' manuscripts, the journal Revista de Educação and teaching yearbooks. The results indicate that idealized men's integral education was procedurally and structurally slow in model schools of the State of Sao Paulo during the time of the so-called First Republic.

**Palavras chave:**

História.  
Ginástica.  
Docentes.  
Educação.

**Resumo:** A partir da pesquisa referente à Escola Complementar e Normal de Piracicaba/SP, a proposição é compreender a presença da Educação Física na formação de professores (1897-1921). Como fontes históricas têm-se os dispositivos legais, os manuscritos de diretores escolares, a Revista de Educação e anuários de ensino. Os resultados indicam que a idealizada educação integral do homem foi processual e estruturalmente lenta nas escolas modelares do Estado de São Paulo no período da primeira República.

**Palabras clave:**

Historia.  
Gimnasia.  
Docentes.  
Educación.

**Resumen:** A partir de una investigación sobre la Escola Complementar e Normal de Piracicaba/SP, la propuesta es comprender la presencia de la Educación Física en la formación de profesores (1897-1921). Como fuentes históricas son utilizados los dispositivos legales, los manuscritos de directores escolares, la Revista de Educación y anuarios de enseñanza. Los resultados indican que la idealizada educación integral del hombre fue gradual y estructuralmente lenta en las escuelas modelo del Estado de São Paulo durante el período la Primera República.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

This study was aimed at showing the presence of Physical Education in teacher training at the Complementary and Normal School (*Escola Complementar e Normal*, 1897-1921) in Piracicaba, state of São Paulo, Brazil. Physical Education was part of school culture in the late 1800s as a result of the requirement to prepare whole citizens physically, intellectually and morally – a responsibility ascribed to school teachers who would educate the children of republican modernity.

In late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century schools, Physical Education was initially developed within the set of practical activities in classes including Gymnastics, Military Exercises, Music, Hygiene Notions, Manual Crafts, Household Economics, etc. This analysis focuses on Gymnastics.

In the period researched and in the context analyzed, the term Physical Education did not refer to a specific school subject in the teacher training program; rather, according to Moreno *et al.* (2012), it referred to a dimension of education for the body and multiple sensitivities of the senses in different curriculum components that fostered the relationship between learning and the body. Therefore, in order to disseminate public and individual health values, social and civic discipline, body (self)control and hygiene for positive, practical and useful life in society, students under teacher training should learn how to take care of their own bodies in different disciplines, so they can teach others to take care of themselves in social life in the future.

Therefore, knowledge and practices of physical cultivation should be institutionalized, introduced, structured and consolidated in primary, model, complementary, normal and secondary schools provided for in the Public Education Reform of the State of São Paulo, according to Law 88 of September 1892.<sup>1</sup> That reform was bold because, in order to meet it, the state would need to build many schools and provide modern training to a high number of teachers who until then used to go only to São Paulo's Normal School. The solution was to create complementary schools to train teachers in Piracicaba, Itapetininga and subsequently, Campinas and of Guaratinguetá.

The Complementary School of Piracicaba was chosen for this study as an empirical object of investigation because it represents one of the first schools to train “complementarist” teachers and it was a model institution for teacher training in São Paulo's society. It was installed in 1897, converted into Normal Primary School in 1911 and it became a regular normal school in 1921 (HONORATO, 2011). The historical process between 1897 and 1921 shows the periodization of documents consulted and analyzed.

Sources on that historical period included legislation of São Paulo's public education found at the Reference Center for Historical Research in Education (CRPHE) of Paulista State University (FCLAr/UNESP); *Revista de Educação* and iconographic images, as well as reports, official letters, school inventory books handwritten by the principals of the Complementary and Normal School of Piracicaba, documents stored on the permanent collection of the “Sud Mennucci” State School and the Public Archives of the State of São Paulo. According to Chartier (1990) and Viñao Frago (2008), the sources consulted indicate practices and representations of the discipline of Gymnastics as well as an educational dimension in school culture related to teacher training: Physical Education.

<sup>1</sup> On the introduction of Gymnastics in São Paulo's Normal School and on body education in normal school students in Belo Horizonte, see Góis Junior; Batista (2010) and Moreno *et al.* (2012) respectively.

## 2 PROGRAM FOR TEACHER TRAINING IN COMPLEMENTARY AND NORMAL EDUCATION

The 1892 reform of São Paulo's public education established three education levels: primary, secondary and higher. It would require a high number of primary school teachers because it established a primary school with 20-40 schoolchildren. Primary education would cover the preliminary and the complementary courses. Compulsory for children aged 7-12, the preliminary course would be taught by teachers trained at the normal school, being offered in preliminary schools or in intermediate and temporary auxiliary ones. Intermediate schools would have teachers qualified according to 1869 and 1887 regulations, and provisional schools should have interim teachers examined by district inspectors or municipal commissions (SÃO PAULO, 1893, p. 20-22).

The complementary course would be directed to students qualified in preliminary education, bridging the gap between preliminary and secondary education; to do so, it would offer an introductory education program. However, since the State of São Paulo faced shortage of teachers and financial resources, public education reformers indicated complementary schools as a palliative solution to the problem. São Paulo's Republican government gave Complementary Schools the task of training teachers. Bill 61 of 1895, describing Law 374 of 3 September 1895, provided in its article 1, sole paragraph: "Students who finish the complementary course and undergo one year of teaching practice at state model schools may be appointed as preliminary teachers with the same advantages granted to Normal School graduates".

"In the state of São Paulo, until 1911, teachers used to be trained in four complementary schools (Piracicaba, 1897; Itapetininga, 1897, Campinas, 1903; Guaratinguetá, 1903)<sup>2</sup> and in São Paulo Normal School. From 1911 to 1921, in primary normal schools (Piracicaba, Campinas, Guaratinguetá, Pirassununga, Botucatu, Casa Branca and Brás) and normal secondary schools (São Paulo, Itapetininga and San Carlos). There were two interdependent models for teacher training.<sup>3</sup>

The Complementary School of Piracicaba trained teachers since its creation in 1897. It offered education based on pedagogical innovations produced at São Paulo Normal School, without neglecting its own ability to educate and create innovations for general culture. Its curriculum followed that established by Decree 400 of November 6, 1896:

1<sup>st</sup> Year – Portuguese, French, Arithmetics, Brazilian Geography, Brazilian History, Calligraphy, Drawing and Gymnastics exercises.

2<sup>nd</sup> Year – Portuguese, French, Algebra, Commercial Bookkeeping, geometry of plane and space, Civic Education (General notions of Brazilian and the State's constitutions), Drawing and Military Exercises.

3<sup>rd</sup> Year – Portuguese, Elements of trigonometry and mechanics, Cosmography, Geography and General History, Manual crafts appropriate to age and sex, and Gymnastics Exercises.

4<sup>th</sup> Year – Physics, Chemistry, Natural History, Hygiene Notions, Household Economics and Gymnastics Exercises. (SÃO PAULO, 1896, p. 2)

2 In São Paulo, starting in 1895, there was also the Complementary School Attached to São Paulo Normal School and the "Prudente de Moraes" Complementary School, created in 1897. The latter was extinguished when it was transferred to Guaratinguetá under Decree 861 of December 12, 1902.

3 On São Paulo's normal primary and secondary schools, see: Rodrigues (1930); Rocco et al (1946); Tanuri (1979); Monarcha (1999); Nosella; Buffa (2002); Pinheiro (2003); Weber (2003); Azevedo (2005); Simões (2005); Teixeira Júnior (2005); Frankfurt (2006); Chiareli (2007); Nery (2010); Dias (2009); Silva (2009); Corbage (2010); Honorato (2011).

Two differences regarding the São Paulo Normal School can be highlighted in the program above. The first one concerns the four teachers known as “living encyclopedias”,<sup>4</sup> as they used to be called by their principals, one for each year, while the Normal School needed 16 teachers, one for each curriculum chair, and seven masters of classes such as Music, Gymnastics, Manual crafts; the second difference was the absence of Pedagogy in the program.

With the organization prescribed above, the Complementary School of Piracicaba operated until 1911. In that year, after the Educational Reform known as “Oscar Thompson”, it was converted into a Primary Normal School, with the following curriculum:

1<sup>st</sup> Year – Portuguese, French, Arithmetics, General Geography, Music, Manual Crafts, Gymnastics and Drawing.

2<sup>nd</sup> Year – Portuguese, French, Algebra, Plane geometry applied to measures, Brazilian Geography, Pedagogy, Music, Manual Crafts, Gymnastics and Drawing.

3<sup>rd</sup> Year – Portuguese, French, Geometry in space, Universal History, Notions of Physics and Chemistry, Pedagogy, Music, Manual Crafts, Gymnastics and Drawing.

4<sup>th</sup> Year – Portuguese, French, Brazilian History, Natural History applied to agriculture and zootechny, Pedagogy and Civic Education, Music, Manual Crafts (men), Household Economics (women), Gymnastics and Drawing. (SÃO PAULO, 1911, p. 01)

Regarding secondary normal schools, the Primary Normal School of Piracicaba offered its program without the disciplines of Experimental Psychology or Experimental Psychology and Anthropological Pedagogy. However, Pedagogy enters all years of the primary normal course.

In the legal requirements above, subjects were distributed as chairs (disciplines) and classes (activities, exercises, practices).<sup>5</sup> According to Tanuri (1979, p. 88), “the difference seemed to be based on the fact that chairs were filled by public selection and classes were assigned to teachers hired according to the school principal’s view”. Considering Viñao Frago’s (2008) guidelines for the historical study of school disciplines, differences are also sources of teacher power and professionalization. In the case of the reality studied in São Paulo, chairs gave greater socio-professional recognition, university readers were paid higher wages than teachers of specific classes, had more stable working arrangements than masters who could be dismissed any time and taught subjects with consolidated status of elementary school disciplines.

In addition to elementary education, education of body and aesthetic senses was part of the training process in interaction with different curricular knowledges, especially in the educational program for teachers, both complementary or normal school graduates. That led to formalization, organization and consolidation of disciplines such as Gymnastics, Military Exercises, Manual Crafts, Drawing, Music and Orpheonic Singing, aimed at physical and artistic cultivation whose goal was to lead individuals to behave in a healthier, whole, polished, complete and civilized way.

Next, we describe the introduction of Gymnastics and questions of Physical Education in teacher training in a specific reality: the Complementary and Normal School of Piracicaba (1897-1921).

<sup>4</sup> They were polyvalent teachers who taught all contents to a series in the complementary school programs.

<sup>5</sup> To refer to Gymnastics included in educational programs, this text will use the terms present in the empirical documents mentioned (activity, practice, exercises, etc.).

### 3 INTRODUCTION AND STRUCTURING OF GYMNASTICS IN THE COMPLEMENTARY AND NORMAL SCHOOL OF PIRACICABA

Reports by principals of the Primary Complementary and Normal School of Piracicaba (1897-1921) include notes on Gymnastics and Military Exercises as well as school games in teacher training. Those are pedagogical actions representing both difficulties and guiding principles in schooling of Physical Education.

For complementary education, the Internal Regulation provided for in Decree 400 of November 6, 1896 defined Gymnastics as a discipline with specific classes taught by a teacher appointed by the school principal, despite exercises given in class by teachers each year. The Gymnastics program consisted of several formations, taking distances, forming chains, fundamental positions, arm and leg exercises, dumbbell gymnastics, sticks, traction elastics, pole vault, clubs, parallel bars, horse, horizontal ladder and horizontal bar. In Military Exercises, in turn, the status of recruit was taught, ranging from the position of the firm standing soldier to marches and alignments, salutes, extended order, columns, changing direction, side formation, closing/opening distances, handling guns and simulated fire exercises, and official positions (SÃO PAULO, 1896).

Gymnastics and Military Exercises also represented the education of body senses that grouped two areas of intervention: the first area included teaching of some useful movements such as military line-ups; the second area includes teaching of physical movements to strengthen muscles aimed at body care and different sensibilities.

In the school year of 1901, according to the class schedule presented by Antonio Alves Aranha, principal of the Complementary School of Piracicaba, Military Exercises were intended to male section of the four-year course and were held on Saturdays between 1:45 pm and 3 pm, while the female section developed Manual Crafts and Household Economics contents. Gymnastics classes were offered for both sexes and separately only for the 1<sup>st</sup>- and 2<sup>nd</sup>-year classes respectively, on Mondays and Thursdays, and on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 12 pm and 12:25 pm.

Although only 15 minutes were intended for each of the four weekly Gymnastics sessions, the estimated time indicates a significant regulation of Gymnastics and distribution of school time in teacher training. Its position in the schedule shows what was expected from it as a recreational and hygiene resource, and for relaxation of intellectual fatigue.<sup>6</sup>

For Moreno *et al.* (2012), school time for Gymnastics and body education should also be considered within the complexity of the set of disciplines, since different educational practices ended up focusing on the body and sensitivities that took shape in distinct times and places in teacher training.

On the one hand, introduction of exercise within the prescribed school time represented innovation focused on comprehensive – intellectual, moral and physical – education inspired by the assumptions of Herbert Spencer, author of *Education: intellectual, moral and physical*, widely known in European and American educational centers. On the other hand, we should check the conditions for implementing Gymnastics in school time.

On development of Gymnastics and Military Exercises, the principal of the Complementary School of Piracicaba, Antonio Alves Spider, reported:

<sup>6</sup> According to Vago (2002, p. 237), "concern with school fatigue affected the design and distribution of time and school work in the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century".

This program, implemented in the four-year history of this school, with some harm to Gymnastics and Military Exercises, which consisted only of movements in classroom for lack of a proper place for these disciplines, was developed by eight teachers who, being living encyclopedias, had to teach a large number of unrelated disciplines to comply with regulations.<sup>7</sup>

In the first years of the school's operation, Gymnastics was limited to the time allocated for it in the classroom. Furthermore, there was no specific teacher for Gymnastics, which was taught by "living encyclopedia" teachers, who had to implement the activities in that precarious space.

Since 1900, an appropriate place was demanded for complementarists to develop Gymnastics exercises. In the words of Antonio Alves Aranha:

I often pointed out to the Government the need to build a house for Gymnastics, but my requests in this regard were not met and the School continued devoid of this improvement, without which Gymnastics teaching will always be severely impaired. Last year I was in charge of producing the plan for that construction and since it was not accepted an engineer of public works came here looking for information for the budget; but that engineer has not returned and the fiscal year ended, so those funds for Gymnastics are gone.<sup>8</sup>

There was concern with distribution and architectural accommodation of Gymnastics classes as well as differentiation between classroom space and Gymnastics space.

In the classroom, students would be limited to writing, reading, concentrating, i. e. thinking, learning how to teach, school furniture such as Chandler desks, to time administratively built and socially embedded. That is, limited to an environment that was geometric and culturally limiting for their body mobility, but intellectually productive.

The gymnasium would represent the modern home geometrically appropriate for students to move, develop physical strength, compensate intellectual weariness, have fun and pleasure, learn hygienic habits, develop military marches and build skills to guide Physical Education behaviors of their future students.

The relationship between classroom and gymnasium is a distinction of what was appreciated for being highly theoretical and practical in the school culture at the time. It represented the distribution and uses of spaces as places of learning, socialization and specific functions in school.

In 1901, the school administration again demanded a gymnasium:

Referring to manual crafts of the male section and to gymnastics, in both sections they were hampered because there are not good facilities in the workshops or a proper home to gymnastics exercises: they only did exercises in the classroom, which is not enough in a Complementary School [...] the school lacks of such gymnasium, without which no one understands what an educational establishment is.<sup>9</sup>

Having a gymnasium for complementarist activities represented certain distance from the Empire's educational structure, confirming the existence of modern republican education and the ability to offer solid training to students-masters. In this sense, the gymnasium could be used as grounds for pedagogical learning focused on physical culture aimed at completing the whole education.

7 ARANHA, Antonio Alves. *Relatório da Diretoria da Escola Complementar de Piracicaba*, 1900. p. 4. Acervo do Arquivo Permanente da Escola Estadual "Sud Mennucci de Piracicaba".

8 ARANHA, Antonio Alves. *Relatório da Diretoria da Escola Complementar de Piracicaba*, 1900. p. 16. Collection of Permanent archives of "Sud Mennucci" State School in Piracicaba".

9 ARANHA, Antonio Alves. *Relatório da Diretoria da Escola Complementar de Piracicaba*, 1901. p. 5, 10. Permanent archives of "Sud Mennucci" State School in Piracicaba".



The issue of the gymnasium was temporarily solved when the Piracicaba institution became a Primary Normal School.

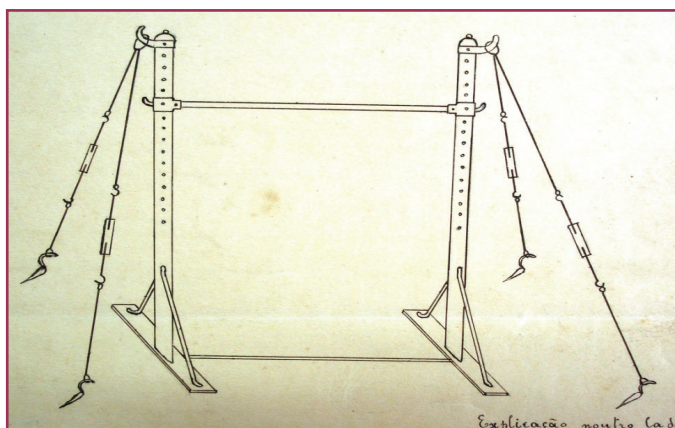
In response to a request by this management, a shed was built that was also suitable for gymnastics exercises. Thanks to that, the lessons of that **discipline** happened more regularly, and problems seen during the year when exercises were held in the open or in their own classes ceased to exist. (Emphasis added).<sup>10</sup> (emphasis added)

I have two observations on the excerpt above. The first one concerns the notion about the discipline in the 1914 report. In the 1911 Education Reform, under Decree 2025, which amended the curricular structure of São Paulo's normal schools, the disciplines were divided into two groups: science and language disciplines and those organized as specific classes; the second group included Gymnastic, Music, Manual Crafts, Drawing and Calligraphy. In the 1920 reform, in turn, under Decree 1750, the disciplines of the normal course program were distributed as chairs and classes, and Gymnastics was considered a class. So from the point of view of legislation during the period studied, Gymnastics was not consolidated a discipline with the same school status as others. The second observation is that the shed for Gymnastics classes mentioned in 1914 was provisional, because a new building for the Normal School of Piracicaba was under construction, which opened in 1917 in neoclassical style and including space for Gymnastics (HONORATO, 2011).

The difficulty of developing Gymnastics classes in the period from Complementary School to Primary Normal School was not just the different status of the discipline and lack of suitable space; there was not enough equipment for Gymnastics exercises.

When analyzing the general inventory book of the Complementary School of Piracicaba,<sup>11</sup> the list of permanent materials includes only two gymnastics frameworks by J. P. Müller.<sup>12</sup> The survey conducted in the São Paulo State Public Archives found a 1915 official letter by Honorato Faustino, the principal of the Primary Normal School of Piracicaba, to Dr. Altino Arantes, Secretary of State for Internal Affairs, requesting 150\$000 for the acquisition of a "fixed transferable bar" for students to perform physical exercises.

Figure 1 – Fixed Transferable Bar

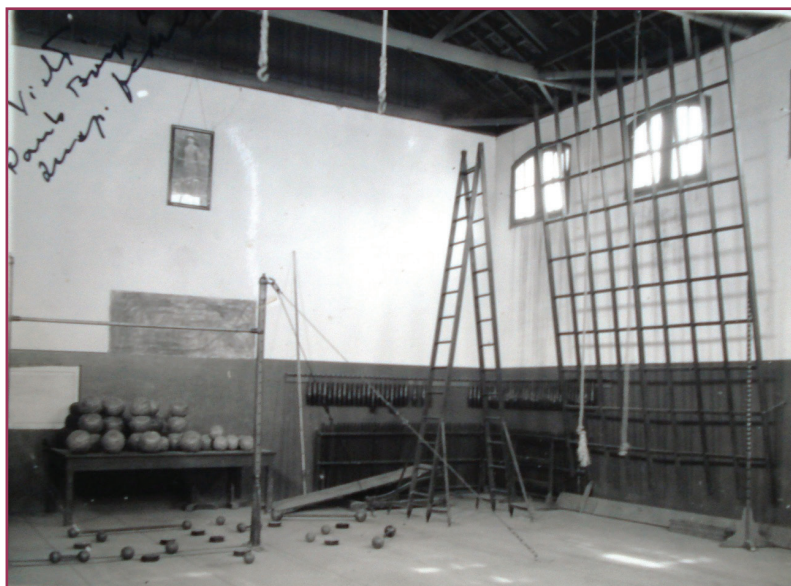


Source: FAUSTINO, Honorato. Letter No. 253 of August 2, 1915. Public Archives of the State of São Paulo. Can: 336. Order 6941.

10 FAUSTINO, Honorato. **Relatório da Diretoria da Escola Normal Primária de Piracicaba**, 1914. p. 21. Permanent Collection of State School "Sud Mennucci of Piracicaba".

11 FAUSTINO, Honorato. **Livro inventário de materiais**. 1920. Permanent Collection of State School "Sud Mennucci of Piracicaba".

12 J. P. Müller's *O meu sistema* was criticized by school inspector F. N. Camargo Couto for overrating rational gymnastics in an individual's "weak part of the body", to later restoring its harmony with the other organs, i. e., medical gymnastics. For Camargo, development through scientific and artistic gymnastics should be completely harmonious and without therapeutic purposes (SÃO PAULO, 1913).

**Figure 2** – Gymnastics Shed of the Normal School of Piracicaba

Source: Permanent Archives of "Sud Mennucci" State School.

The image of the gymnastics shed shows a tiled roof with no ceiling, smooth floor, windows airing the environment, a painting of a gymnast and equipment such as a fixed bar, dumbbells spread over the floor, clubs, gymnastics sticks lined, ladder suspended ropes, among others. It was a space for small groups, and the school also had an open recreational area and a yard for exercises, military formations and school games (see Figures 3 and 4). The shed was more appropriate in the architecture and organization of the Normal School of Piracicaba.

The 1920<sup>13</sup> inventory of materials showed a more significant amount of equipment in the gymnasium of the Primary Normal School of Piracicaba, installed in the new building since 1917. Acquisition of equipment and increased attention to Gymnastics classes happened when the Complementary Primary School became a Normal School.

In legal terms, the principal should organize the teacher training course including gymnastics activities at least twice a week for the male and the female sections. From the Education Reform 1911, the normal school should hire dedicated teachers for Gymnastics, Manual Crafts, Drawing and Music.

In 1912, after David Müller was hired, and in 1917, when complementarist Olívia Bianco and normalist Maria Ferraz de Toledo<sup>14</sup> were hired, teaching of physical exercises increased at the Piracicaba School. Until then, classes had been irregular in the two sections and occurred only in the case of assistant teachers taking the position, for instance, Luintina Soares, Laura Martins de Mello and Aurora Camargo da Silva Rodrigues.<sup>15</sup>

13 FAUSTINO, Honorato. **Livro inventário de materiais**. 1920. Located at: Permanent archives of "Sud Mennucci" State School in Piracicaba.

14 Olívia Bianco graduated as a teacher in 1900, the first class of the Complementary School of Piracicaba. She was an associate teacher of the following schools: Grupo Escolar "Barão do Rio Branco", Grupo Escolar "Moraes Barros", Grupo Escolar-Modelo Anexo and Curso Complementar. (FAUSTINO, Honorato. **Livro de apontamento sobre o pessoal da Escola Normal de Piracicaba**. 1921. p. 7. Located at: Permanent archives of "Sud Mennucci" State School in Piracicaba.

15 FAUSTINO, Honorato. **Relatório da Diretoria da Escola Normal Primária de Piracicaba**. 1912. Located at: Permanent archives of "Sud Mennucci" State School in Piracicaba.



Teachers encouraged students' behavior towards cultivating a healthy, harmonious and disciplined body, consistent with the social way of life.

#### Gymnastics and school games

In addition to students' intellectual, moral and civic development, we have not neglected their **Physical Education**. That is how we sought to develop rational gymnastics that is appropriate to the harmonious development of the several parts of the body while largely increasing educational games, carefully chosen, so they might not only arouse interest but also achieve the goal.<sup>16</sup> (Emphasis added)

At the turn from the 1910s to the 1920s, Physical Education becomes increasingly present as a dimension of teacher training. Teacher Olívia Bianco, in the article entitled "Education Physica" published in *Revista de Educação* in 1921, also understood that the purpose of Physical Education was to promote harmonious and proportional development of human capacity in a way that was profitable, utilitarian and efficient for life.

For Bianco, the "Physical Education, in its absolute sense, is the process aimed at forming the typical man". Therefore, she made an analogy between body cultivation and evolutionary growth:

The same gradations of physical perfection are also seen in man. Horrific deformities on one extreme and divine beauty on the other, with a scale of infinite gradations between them. The sphere of Physical Education – today an art of conscious goals and already very far from empiricism – includes directing humans to their perfect somatic organization, just like intellectual and moral organization prepares the qualities of mind and character. (BIANCO, 1921, p. 110)

Physical and bodily gradations should be achieved by those deemed physically inferior; therefore, those in a condition of inferiority should be subject to even more rational and scientifically systematized exercises, and become ideal types.

Future teachers were recommended to be always the first ones to set an example of physical integrity and character in every act of their professional lives. Hygiene and health control issues should not be neglected, as principal Honorato Faustino reminded in a report:

As for Physical Education:

On the other hand, we have not neglected all that concerns the education of the senses and the correction not only of their physically physiological errors, but also of their pathological deviations, according to the elements we have.

Completing this part, we have sought to generalize certain notions of hygiene, putting them within reach of children's intelligence in order to accustom them to avoiding changes in health.<sup>17</sup>

Health was the condition of good physiological functioning and the body's physical needs, otherwise, the sickly body would hinder intellectual, psychic and soul development, requiring that educators never lose sight of "the fullness of the truth contained in the luminous teaching aphorism – *mens sana in corpore sano*".<sup>18</sup>

At school, physical and hygienic rationality provided by regulated exercises aimed at preventing and/or eliminating students' addictions possibly acquired in the streets and

16 FAUSTINO, Honorato. *Relatório da Diretoria da Escola Normal Primária de Piracicaba*. 1919, p. 21. Located at: Permanent archives of "Sud Mennucci" State School in Piracicaba.

17 FAUSTINO, Honorato. *Relatório da Diretoria da Escola Normal de Piracicaba*. 1921, p. 9. Located at: Permanent archives of "Sud Mennucci" State School in Piracicaba.

18 FAUSTINO, Honorato. *Relatório da Diretoria da Escola Normal de Piracicaba*. 1921, p. 9. Located at: Permanent archives of "Sud Mennucci" State School in Piracicaba.

intervening in orthopedic correction. Therefore, Physical Education was also expected to change the behavior and customs of future teachers in charge of circulating a model of healthy physical culture based on schooled knowledge.

Physical Education, disseminated to normal school students in Piracicaba in the early 1920s, sought to replace the classic collection of fastidious muscle exercises that did not arouse interest and were detrimental to students (BIANCO, 1921). Unpleasant physical exertion, considered a burden, could not have a more prominent place, despising pleasure and emotional tensions since they would not contribute much to whole education.

Normalist teaching increasingly included the principles of modern Physical Education based on Swedish Gymnastics, calisthenics and school games to harmoniously develop muscles, organs and vital energies, and strengthen internal forces to engage with the outside world.<sup>19</sup>

**Figure 3** – Normal School Students of Piracicaba in Gymnastics training



Source: Permanent Archive of the State School "Sud Mennucci".

**Figure 4** – Game "ball to the basket" during the sports festival on April 21, at the Normal School of Piracicaba



Source: *Revista de Educação*, 1921, p. 144.

<sup>19</sup> In *Revista de Ensino*, edited by the Associação Beneficente do Professorado Público de São Paulo between 1902-1918, series of articles were published on rational gymnastics, Physical Education and school games. About Physical Education, see also the studies of Vago (2002); Soares (2004).

In school, outdoor games, modern gymnastics and other practices acquired a less muscular character. Physical Education should be a dimension of teaching that allowed moderate exercises of body, mind, emotions and muscles. Exercises for speed, strength, agility, balance, rhythm, running and jumping would result in elegance of movement, much more connected to good health than the fatigue of powerful muscles, as pointed by teacher Bianco:

School games, so considered, promote intense joy and liveliness in everyone, having many physical, and mental and moral benefits. They also result in sociability and fellowship, initiating children in kindness towards competitors. (BIANCO, 1921, p. 111)

Happy and beautiful gymnastics games and exercises had a way to cultivate civility, politeness and aesthetic feelings. Physical Education would enhance teacher training for public civil life, which required usefulness, civility and urbanity.

Physical Education as fostered at the Normal School of Piracicaba was also a symbol of nationalism by preparing a generation of strong and healthy young people. In preparation for the serious incumbencies of human life, according to Olívia Bianco (1921, p. 112), it was recognized by its “purely individual or collective benefits, aimed at improving the race that would result in the nation’s greatness as an important corollary”.

Intended for civility, morality and patriotism, Physical Education would promote good values by bringing together courageous, respectful and cordial behaviors in the public sphere. It would be each student’s duty to strive in constant work of harmonic improvement of the body in order to fulfill his or her individual and social destiny.

#### 4 FINAL REMARKS

The Complementary and Normal School of Piracicaba indicates that the introduction of Gymnastics as a proto-discipline<sup>20</sup> in teacher education was procedural and structurally slow. That is because São Paulo’s Republicans’ legal provisions idealized the kinds of graded schools, educational programs and schooled culture model to which the school unit of that historical moment would hardly correspond in terms of organization, operation, financing, physical structure and body of experts to teach the disciplines mandated.

Finally, the study of Physical Education in the history of teacher training schools enables significant reflections on the educational field in order to understand what kind of whole man should be and was being formed for life in society, which science and health conceptions of body would govern the training of future teachers, which school spaces and times were experienced and/or prescribed by state regulations, how model schools responsible for educational innovation were structured and equipped, among others. Reflecting on the educational field, as has been pointed out here, also means thinking Physical Education as very specific regulation about students, which was not restricted to natural automatic mechanisms, for there was a range of biological and physiological regulations as well as required social, political and psychological regulations. The whole education of future teachers also depended on the physical and aesthetic order for private and public life in society.

20 Viñao Frago (2008) recommends the use of *proto-discipline* as a more general term when there is no concrete case of school discipline and we have to speak of discipline, subject, exercise or formative school activity in a curriculum.

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