

# Summary of the book “Who learns? Research and Qualification in Physical Education at School”

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**Abstract:** This summary of the book “Who learns? Research and Qualification in Physical Education at School”, organized by Vicente Molina Neto, Fabiano Bossle, Lisandra Oliveira e Silva and Mônica Urroz Sanchotene, edited by UNIJUÍ (2009), aims at presenting the work and highlighting the particularities in each text.

**Key words:** teaching, physical education at school, review

*Who learns? Research and Qualification in Physical Education at School* is a collection of ten essays organized by Vicente Molina Neto, Fabiano Bossle, Lisandra Oliveira e Silva and Mônica Urroz Sanchotene and published by UNIJUÍ in 2009. The work gathers, in 216 pages, texts developed from the findings of Master’s and Doctorate’s studies carried out by Qualitative Studies, Teacher Education and Pedagogical Practice in Physical Education and Sports Science (F3P-Efice) Study Group, linked to the Post-Graduate Program in Human Movement Science (PPGCMH) of UFRGS’s Physical Education School.

The work is relevant to the academy, theoretically consistent and politically engaged, since it presents a set of research studies about teacher’s education based on long term field work at schools that encompasses constant communication with collaborators about interpretations/analysis of the records even before they were submitted to the public. An investigative trait, or, as the organizers themselves call it, an “investigative hang” that

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retraces back to the early 1990's, when Vicente Molina Neto, the group coordinator, developed the thesis *La cultura docente del profesorado de educacion fisica de las escuelas publicas de Porto Alegre* at the University of Barcelona.

Additionally, studies about teacher's education and pedagogical practice in Physical Education (PE), developed within *strictu sensu* Post-Graduate Programs have not been published as books with the content expected by professionals dedicated to the field. Many factors lead to a decrease in offer of these publications in Brazil, but among them, two factors are considered to be significant: the reduced amount of research groups linked to Post-Graduate Programs dedicated to this PE specialty (data pointed out in a summary in the first chapter of the collection); and the overvaluation of the essay format opposed to the book format for institutional assessment of the scientific production of Post-Graduate researchers in the field.

So far as the book is underappreciated in the institutional assessment of Post-Graduate researchers in the field, and the fact that this professional accreditation maintains a faculty professor as the advisor of Master and PhD students, the mere fact that the F3P-Efice invests in the format to provide visibility for its production provides *Who Learns?* with a powerful political tone. This is one way of resisting the academic asymmetries of different natures, a minor uprising against the progressive "epistemicide" (SANTOS, 2003) of the sociocultural and pedagogical PE community in Brazil. It is undoubtedly one of the "invisible" qualities of this work.

The premises that lead the F3P-Efice group to gather texts under the book format gain an overview in the introduction that can be summarized in the paragraph below:

A research group is not made of investigative activities, it also needs to qualify researchers and professors, share the knowledge it produces with the public by means of courses and permanent education programs and, above all, submit its ideals, activities and its

results to the public eye for critical appreciation. This is the character of this book and the idea behind its organization and title. Who learns during an investigation process? (MOLINA NETO *et al.*, 2009, p.11).

The chapter “Pedagogical practice of the Physical Education professorate in the school routine – researching and learning: a meta point of view”, written by Vicente Molina Neto and Rosane Maria Kreuzburg Molina, highlights the specificity of the research projects developed by the F3Efice. The text works as a theoretical and methodological milestone of research projects carried out by the group for the last ten years, and as a flag of this production in the map of PE Post-Graduation production in Brazil. It may be said, paraphrasing the chapter’s subtitle, that it is a kind of “metatext” of the work as a whole. In retrospective, the authors examine the F3P-Efice trajectory, which focuses its studies in the professional routine of the municipal public schools PE professorate in Porto Alegre. The municipal teaching network is the confluence point of a series of research projects carried out by the group with the purpose of involving the PE professorate in a collaborative relationship based on the notion of teaching education-investigation and leeway. Besides the ordinary investigative locus, Molina Neto e Molina (2009, p. 26) point out that the narrative has been working as a methodological foundation over which “a kind of co-authorship between investigator and collaborators” sits, based on a “long process of listening”. Among several studies carried out by the group, the authors quote, for instance, a PhD and a scientific initiation investigation that performed ethnography with 16 PE teachers (presented in more detail in the following chapter) and a case study with a black PE teacher, respectively.

Both research projects used observations, interviews and personal accounts focused on the experience of this teaching collective using the network’s political-pedagogical project, which organizes the school

curriculum in educational cycles and thematic complexes, emphasizing the democratization of the school and the access to knowledge, besides suggesting the interdisciplinary collective work, teacher education and the recognition of diversity as a strategy for the operationalization of the proposal (MOLINA NETO; MOLINA, 2009, p. 26-27).

The long-lasting experience with the coordination of research projects of the kind has led the authors to resume the chapter with an extremely thought-provoking discussion: the mismatch between the administrator's time and the professorate's time. They criticize the pedagogical innovation projects hastily implemented by educational administrators eager for media visibility, however inconsiderate to the actual material condition of schools and the teaching culture. There is no question about this mismatch, even because management and teaching are educational activities of different nature, and the biggest problem is the lack of articulation among political, administrative and pedagogical practice in implementing public policies. This lack of agreement among "defense/midfield/strike" is sometimes caused by the imposition of projects derived from offices guided by the professorate's adjunction, and, on the other hand, by the lack of educational planning of the management "on duty", which leads teachers to pedagogical isolation and individualist solutions. As pointed out by Molina Neto and Molina (2009, p. 32), "it is not possible to assign or to control everything, as it isn't possible to have an absolute lack of control". Therefore, the authors emphasize the need to invest in the construction of investigation projects, in the human resources education and leeway at school as one of the ways to maintain an effectively connected educational network.

The thought presented by Molina Neto and Molina in the first chapter allows the reader to understand the composition and the conducting line of the nine chapters that

follow, all based on research developed by members of the F3P-Efice inside the PPGCMH.

In the chapter “The pedagogical practice of Physical Education in the curriculum organized by cycles: innovating, resisting or abandoning?”, Maria Cecília Camargo Günther shows the impact of the curriculum organized by educational cycles at Municipal schools in Porto Alegre (RMEPA) over PE teachers’ pedagogical practice. The author places the cycles – implemented as experience in 1995 and later made mandatory in 2000 – within the *Escola Cidadã* project introduced by the Popular Management Municipal Secretary of Education in 1994. Günther lays out her choice for ethnography, the methodological basis of her PhD thesis, and the theoretical justifications, to assume the accounts of the 16 teachers as the narrative. The author analyses the innovations, permanencies, obstacles and transformations unleashed by the implementation of this system in the PE class routine and from the impressions, understandings and feelings shared among the researcher and her collaborators during the research process.

In “Collective planning of Physical Education teachers as a possibility to reconstruct the political and pedagogical proposal”, Fabiano Bossle reviews the literature and some conceptions about planning as an attempt to understand the difficulty claimed by PE teachers to implement the principles of collective planning incorporated to the educational cycles proposal of RMEPA, thus an attempt to avoid that the political and pedagogical projects of public schools rely completely on corporate models that rule the private education scenario. In spite of the difficulties faced in order to achieve this collaborative effort at times marked by the “new managerialism”, an expression by Michael Apple quoted in the text, Bossle (2009, p. 85) understands that the collective planning in educational communities can work as a “proposal for inclusion and participation based on citizenship principles”. The author states, based on the findings of his Master’s research carried out in 2003, that this way of planning the educational life would lead to the “understanding

of the meaning of space and time built inside schools by the entire educational community” (2009, p.86) and, as a consequence, a better understanding of the “willingness to participate” rooted in the organization of teaching by educational cycles introduced in Porto Alegre.

In the chapter “On many things performed by the Physical Education teacher at school”, Elisandro Schultz Witizorecki builds the text in first person from the accounts of a PE teacher in the RMEPA. The educational experience of the teacher is brought to light through a questioning about the senses that move (or stagnate) his daily work at school. The text was woven in cooperation between author and collaborator during the author’s Master thesis unfolding in the PPGCMH. Through accurate and sensitive listening, Witizorecki (2009, p. 102) does not intend, as the author himself states in the text, “to capture reality in order to interpret it, but to unfold other accounts” from this first interpretation.

It is a type of production that, more than giving a voice to the teacher (an intention criticized by Witizorecki at a passage of text in which he quotes Goodson), welcomes the collaborator’s self-writing in co-authorship in the text.

In “Physical Education teachers and interdisciplinarity”, Ricardo Reuter Pereira deals with the theme of interdisciplinarity from an ethnographic study carried out in RMEPA. The author seeks to examine the theme from the understanding and the practice of PE teachers about interdisciplinarity within the educational cycles, which is also predicted in this proposal. Pereira argues mainly that the predominance of sports practice in PE classes, which is outstanding in the educational trajectory of the teachers that collaborated, along with their little availability to understand the peculiarities of the other school subjects, is one of the many justifications for the diffidence of interdisciplinary initiatives involving PE in the RMEPA.

In a way, Joarez Santini introduces the health issue within the investigative scenario of F3P-Efice when he takes upon the analysis of the physical and mental health wearing routine of most RMEPA teachers in his text “Factors involved in the process of developing the Professional Burnout Syndrome in Physical Education teachers: a study in Porto Alegre City Hall”. Based on his own experience of more than 25 years teaching in the Municipal Network, Santini (2009, p.121) points out how “the suffering and disillusion with the teaching duties and a difficult relationship with the school community, as well as the personal disengagement with work” gradually wear out the teachers’ energies. The author discourses about the syndrome itself and about how the professional choices, the academic education, working conditions, social aspects and the interpersonal relationships concur for the aggravation of the individual set of teachers affected by the disease. Santini shows in an incisive and well-sustained way that the explanations focused on unique causes generate distortions in the analysis of the phenomenon and promote mitigation measures to medicate such a complex problem.

“Interpersonal knowledge (and learning) production: the challenge of research”, written by Lisandra Oliveira e Silva, is essentially a methodological chapter. The author explains the modus operandi of the participant observation, which allowed her to understand the process of teaching identization of five PE teachers in RMEPA in her Master’s research. Silva ponders over the effects of participant observation on the researcher from a rather unusual situation, a valuable one for the understanding of the backstage of such a research. The researcher shows how restless it can be for the participant observer to see themselves in the position of the object under observation by its collaborator, especially when the latter makes a point of declaring his/her position, such as the situation with Silva (2009, p.144) at a particular moment of her field work, when the collaborator asked her: “why did you just cross your arms? I am also watching you”. Thereafter, the

author discusses in detail the procedures to be adopted and the inversions necessary for those who intend to venture the qualitative research field in direct contact with school communities.

In the chapter “What teachers do at school: different socializations are at stake under a uniform Physical Education”, Mônica Urroz Sanchotene approaches the sports theme in the implementation of pedagogical practices by PE teachers of RMEPA under a very interesting and creative perspective. The author realizes that behind the apparent lack of variety of the PE classes sports practice, “several practices, objectives and socializations are hidden” (2009, p. 157). This realization came from an ethnographic case study carried out for over a year at a RMEPA school during her Master’s research in which it was briefly presented. The main argument becomes more empirically solid when the author shows in detail the nuances of teachers’ practice, understanding and intentionality towards this classic PE school program.

Marzo Vargas dos Santos, in “The perception of black students about ethnic-racial relationships and bodily practices: primary considerations from a discussion group” analyses the discourses about ethnic-racial differences from the meanings attributed by black students (most of them from the suburbs, where most RMEPA are located) to racism situations, whether veiled or wide-open, experienced at schools in general and particularly during PE classes. In order to do so, Marzo (2009, p. 185) uses the materiality of the speech extracted from a discussion group composed exclusively of black students in order to “reduce the chance of a discriminative or embarrassing situation impeding the debate” and contaminating the findings of his Master’s research. The author points out that the black students gathered in this meeting attend PE classes - although it is far from being a racism free zone, being a potential space for affirming their ethnicity, especially considering the positive identification with successful black athletes - but that they do not keep from exposing the racial prejudice socially hidden in this and other

school environments and from claiming emergencies in terms of the implementation of affirming policies.

“Investigation and teaching: contributions and boundaries of the path between these points”, written by Vera Regina Oliveira Diehl, is the collection’s closing chapter. Although the organization criteria of the texts were not explained, this chapter may have been put in this position because it handles the theme of the teacher-researcher experience in a more explicit manner. In her analysis, Diehl emphasizes the simultaneity of the experiences as a newcomer teacher in RMEPA and at the same time as a junior researcher in PPGCMH. This situation allowed the author to build some creative solutions, such as the “teaching diary”, a way of registering her daily experiences that provided her with more security to trigger dialogues about pedagogical practices with the collaborators. The author stresses that in these cases, it is necessary to handle previous knowledge and exercise the unfamiliarity with the things presented as familiar in this “hybrid” position within a same relationship network. Diehl observes that, as the teaching exercise positively affected her performance as a researcher, her presence as a researcher has also positively affected the teaching practice of collaborators, i.e., it fomented shared learning. The answer to the title of this work seems to lie exactly there, within this mutual influence among the various subjects in the research network – Who learns? The one who knows how to read.

**Summary of the book “Quem aprende? Pesquisa e formação em Educação Física escolar”**

**Resumo:** Esta resenha do livro Quem aprende? Pesquisa e formação em Educação Física escolar, organizado por Vicente Molina Neto, Fabiano Bossle, Lisandra Oliveira e Silva e Mônica Urroz Sanchotene, editado pela UNIJUÍ (2009), tem por objetivo apresentar a obra e destacar as peculiaridades de cada texto.

**Palavras-chave:** Docentes. Educação Física escolar. Revisão.

**Reseña del libro “Quem aprende? Pesquisa e formação em Educação Física escolar”**

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**Palabras clave:** Docentes. Educación Física. Revisión.

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