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Introduction of Traditional Games at Different Stages of the Physical Education Lesson

[Juegos tradicionales para las diferentes partes de las clases de Educación Física]

[Jogos tradicionais para as diferentes partes das aulas de educação física]

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Games can develop children's language, thoughts, tastes, and memory. They contribute to learning and the growth of basic motor skills and physical capacities. Among them, traditional games help shape healthy, strong children with the tools needed to defend their cultural and identity values.

Aim: To propose traditional games for the different stages of the Physical Education lesson at the Armando Mestre Martinez Elementary School.

Materials and methods: A non-experimental study was done, which combined the utilization of several different methods, such as theoretical methods (historical-logical), empirical methods (a questionnaire of Physical Education teachers and third-grade



students to collect information about the utilization of traditional games in Physical Education lessons, and documentary analysis of third-grade Physical Education programs. The percentage calculation statistics were processed using SPSS 21.0, for the implementation of descriptive statistics procedures.

Results: Several different traditional games were suggested for implementation at different stages of the Physical Education lesson, in keeping with the objective of the lesson and its parts.

Conclusions: The traditional games used as part of the Physical Education lesson contributed to preserving the students' cultural identity and physical-cognitive development.

Keywords: Traditional games, Physical Education lesson.

RESUMEN

Introducción: Los juegos desarrollan en los niños el lenguaje, pensamiento, el gusto, la memoria, contribuye al aprendizaje, así como al desarrollo de habilidades motrices básicas y capacidades físicas. Dentro de ellos, los juegos tradicionales, forman a un niño sano, fuerte y con las herramientas necesarias para defender sus valores culturales e identitarios.

Objetivo: Proponer juegos tradicionales para las diferentes partes de la clase de Educación Física en la Escuela Primaria "Armando Mestre Martínez".

Materiales y métodos: Se realiza un estudio no experimental, se combina la utilización de los diferentes métodos, métodos teóricos, como el histórico-lógico, los métodos empíricos, se trabaja la encuesta a los profesores de Educación Física y los alumnos del 3er grado para obtener información acerca de la utilización de los juegos tradicionales en las clases de Educación Física, el análisis documental se concreta esencialmente en los programas de Educación Física de 3er grado. Para el procesamiento estadístico se determinaron a través del software SPSS 21.0 que permite la aplicación de los procedimientos de la estadística descriptiva donde se define el cálculo porcentual.



Resultados: Para dar solución a esta situación en particular se hace una propuesta de diferentes juegos tradicionales para cada una de las partes de la clase de Educación Física, teniendo en cuenta el objetivo de la clase y de cada una de sus partes.

Conclusiones: La utilización de los juegos tradicionales en la Educación Física en la etapa escolar, contribuye al rescate de la identidad cultural y al desarrollo físico y cognitivo del estudiante.

Palabras clave: Juegos Tradicionales, clases Educación Física.

RESUMO

Introdução: Os jogos desenvolvem a linguagem, o raciocínio, o paladar e a memória das crianças, contribuem para o aprendizado, bem como para o desenvolvimento de habilidades motoras básicas e capacidades físicas. Dentro deles, os jogos tradicionais formam uma criança saudável e forte, com as ferramentas necessárias para defender seus valores culturais e sua identidade.

Objetivo: Propor jogos tradicionais para as diferentes partes da aula de Educação Física na Escola Primária "Armando Mestre Martínez".

Materiais e métodos: Foi realizado um estudo não experimental, combinando o uso de diferentes métodos, métodos teóricos, como o método histórico-lógico, métodos empíricos, uma pesquisa com professores de Educação Física e alunos da 3ª série para obter informações sobre o uso de jogos tradicionais nas aulas de Educação Física e análise documental do programa de Educação Física da 3ª série. O processamento estatístico foi realizado por meio do software SPSS 21.0, que permite a aplicação de procedimentos de estatística descritiva em que se define o cálculo de porcentagem.

Resultados: Com o objetivo de solucionar essa situação particular, é feita uma proposta de diferentes jogos tradicionais para cada uma das partes da aula de Educação Física, levando em conta o objetivo da aula e de cada uma de suas partes.

Conclusões: A utilização de jogos tradicionais na Educação Física escolar contribui para o resgate da identidade cultural e para o desenvolvimento físico e cognitivo do aluno.



Palavras-chave: Jogos tradicionais, aulas de Educação Física.

INTRODUCTION

Games are necessary for child growth and progress stimulation from the early ages, used as an instrument to adapt, experience, acquire knowledge, and set up bonds. At the first level, it is a bond between reality and fantasy (Calderón, 2021, p.5).

Children see games as a getaway filled with their emotions, conflicts, and strategies, assuming their own roles and those of others. Children do not simulate; they live each experience as one of their own. To them, being able to play is like becoming interested in people, activities, things, and themselves. It is a reflection, a way of adjusting to their surroundings and critical learning, during their early ages. Games are also essential to shaping their personalities (Calderón, 2021, p.9).

Children learn by doing. Since the first year of age, the child is exposed to objects and toys that dream and move in different directions and are found through the most diverse relationships with objects that foster their intelligence.

In Physical Education, several activities look to achieve healthy growth of children's bodies, including movement development, such as the formation of hygienic and cultural habits, critical aspects to become healthy. Basic motor skills are emphasized due to their importance in children's motor development, becoming one of the pillars of physical activities (Calderón, 2021, p.3).

Physical Education strengthens human health, it permits a person's physical growth and perfection. It has a positive and significant influence on the individual's spiritual world, emotions, esthetic tastes, and the scientific conception of the world, and it paves the way for the formation of consciousness and highly moral behavior. At the same time, it offers enormous possibilities for general training and optimization, of free expression and self-assertiveness. It also brings the happiness of communicating with someone else, sharing emotions, and a sense of collective work (Calderón, 2021, p.8).



In elementary education, it is seen as the general education of children, offering quite a few possibilities of development, permitting greater approximation to their own bodies. In elementary education, games constitute an indispensable element, a wonderful stimulant through which children become perceptive, light, clever, quick, skillful, and strong thanks to the games they play.

Today, education points to higher teaching quality, which entails the necessary search for outcomes in the teaching-learning process, and the study and search for other factors that might lead to greater results.

The national Cuban system looks to shape a different kind of individual. Hence, to accomplish it, education should be as a whole integrated with educative, instructive, moral, esthetic, and physical dimensions, in which the nature of individuals plays an essential role, along with the living conditions and the social environment, fully ensuring the learners' bodies. Physical exercise and games offer broad possibilities for action and interaction to the growing bodies and personalities.

The Physical Education teacher should design the working program at this educational level, seeking compliance with the objectives, contents, methods, and assessment. Other aspects, like the type of personal relationships, the organization of space and time, the furniture, and resources, etc. (personal and material elements). Therefore, the customization of teaching will include the learners' needs toward their progress, and awareness of the relevance of their level of engagement. The educators will also condition the progress of the basic needs of their students, as well as their levels of the progress of the basic capacities of the students, and their levels of personal and social growth (Carmenate, 2021, p.26).

Physical Education entails a flexible perspective, which adds to the contextualization and functionality of the teaching-learning process, providing every aid and condition for proper child development and knowledge. It will enable a broader extent of the most general objectives of the educational system at this level.



Being unjustly blockaded by the United States of America, along with the constant obstacles, the people continue to fight for survival, for the recognition of the national history in a world impregnated by consumerism and lack of memory.

The present Cuban Physical Education is constantly threatened during the first cycle of elementary education, in which the child's harmonious and multilateral development is hindered. Sports games, and passive or board games, appear to replace other ancient forms of games in schools, thus affecting the cultural ties between new and old generations, particularly thanks to the level of after-school preference for electronic games, without the required balance of time and degree. Likewise, the Physical Education programs of the first cycle lack contents associated with the inclusion of traditional children's games, thus putting all the responsibility on the teacher, concerning the addition of traditional children's games to the Games Chapter of the program. (Calderón, 2021, p.21).

Therefore, there is an urgent need to preserve the cultural legacy at the same pace the current developments, such as the loss of our cultural memory, are taking place. This fact alone might contribute to a novel and transcendental way of nurturing the children's cultural background, making them upright citizens, capable of recognizing the traditions and values around them, as citizens of this nation, with ample knowledge of millenary cultures, fostering the knowledge and diffusion of the original cultures, and being able to fight against biased paradigms, and for the preservation and reconstruction of the cultural identity.

A review of research papers on games, by Beltrán & Soto, (2017); Londoño & Rojas (2021); Olivares, *et al.* (2022), Hernández *et al.* (2020) corroborated their efforts in the implementation of game variants that favored the development of basic motor skills through the Physical Education Lesson.



Previous national and international studies (Díaz, *et al.*, 2021 & Varela, *et al.*, 2021) dealt with the inclusion of traditional games that favor the values of respect and tolerance in the lesson. The research articles relied on diagnostic studies and plan design for actions in after-school sports activities in the municipal education system schools. The results pointed to the need for encouraging active student engagement in pre-sport and traditional games in the Physical Education lessons, since at this age playing activities are not common.

Other studies about this particular issue were conducted by Fernández (2010) and Vera *et al.* (2019), who tackled the topic in the first cycle of elementary education, with motivational actions aiming to rescue the traditional games in the Physical Education class.

The previously mentioned research dealt with games from dimensions like games for the development of skills and capacities in school, improvements in fine motricity, games as recreational activities, and traditional games in the Physical Education lesson. Therefore, it is important to rescue the traditional games through the Physical Education lesson, in order to achieve proper child intellectual and cultural development through the Physical Education class.

The diagnostic process was based on observation and informal interviews, and the following irregularities were determined:

- The children feel more attracted to electronic games than other types of games.
- There are difficulties in the inclusion of traditional games during the Physical Education lesson.
- The children found it difficult to preserve and show their costumes and traditions.

Knowing the enormous advantages of games for the development of significant activities with children is the main objective of integrated children's education, which



favor the educative and socializing aspects of individuals that contribute to the development and learning as they are engaged in the process.

Games, as a leading activity performed outdoors or indoors, bring happiness to children, producing a proportionate development of children. At the Armando Mestre elementary school, the community of Pueblo Grifo, the systematic work on traditional games in the Physical Education lesson was observed to be poor. There is a little transmission of traditional games within families (parents to children) that can strengthen their cultural background due to the strong influences the children are exposed to, in a constantly changing century.

Aim: To propose traditional games for the different parts of the Physical Education lessons at the Armando Mestre Martinez Elementary School.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A non-experimental study of 31 third-grade was done to students being part of an intentional sample (aged 8-9), 13 male and 18 female, accounting for 53% of the students in that grade.

The study was done at the Armando Mestre Martinez Elementary School, municipality of Cienfuegos, between November 2021 and June 2022.

The methodological strategy and data collection relied on the utilization of several different methods, such as theoretical methods (historical-logical) to set up the timeline to know the existing background and the contributions to this topic; empirical methods (a questionnaire of Physical Education teachers and the third-grade students to collect information about the utilization of traditional games in Physical Education lessons); and documentary analysis of third-grade Physical Education programs to further study the object of study, especially in the first cycle of elementary education.



SPSS 21.0 was used for statistical processing, which permitted the application of descriptive statistics procedures defining the percentage estimates, as shown in the results tables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of observations

Two lessons were observed in each group (four groups in the fourth grade), totaling eight lessons.

To main indicators were considered:

- The utilization of games at different stages of the lesson.
- The utilization of traditional games at different stages of the lesson.

Main results:

The utilization of traditional games at different stages of the lesson was almost null, except for one lesson (12.5%). Only 50% was observed for game inclusion as the main activity at these ages focused on skill, capacity, and habit development.

Carmenate (2021) reported similar results in lesson observation and said that during the Physical Education process, the activities were limited to warm-ups followed by the practice of a specific sport. The traditional games were rarely observed to cheer up and, as an affective-participatory technique to maintain their interest in a particular teaching activity. However, in our socialist education system, games rank highest.

Results of the documentary review



The Physical Education programs and the methodological guidelines of the third grade in elementary schools were reviewed. In elementary education, the programs and methodological guidelines for Physical Education are structured by grades and units; in them, the subject's objectives for the different levels are stated. Then the documents lay out the specific objectives for each grade, and then the content units for each grade, which must be thoroughly met. They have a general scope that guides the different grade teachers, depending on their conditions and the characteristics of student groups into designing their own activities.

The games for that grade have a significant role, with a considerably high practice time allotted due to their marked influence on the proportionate development of personality, as well as the interest and motivation expressed by the children in this activity.

Rhythmic activities develop rhythm, spatial orientation, body expression, and traditional games, mainly. They are meant to pursue and combine different rhythms during their physical activities, emphasizing movement coordination, respiratory exercises, and proper posture.

The Physical Education program compels the need for new alternatives that encourage the utilization of traditional games in the Physical Education lesson at its different stages, all of which will contribute to child education and the rescue of national traditions.

In practice, Vera *et al.* (2019) noted that many of these games are short, though repetitive; when a round is over, another starts right away, and not much material is necessary. Accordingly, these games may be introduced in schools easily, without the utilization of sophisticated resources or special times. Considering that these games originated in ancient times, they somehow have remained in every generation and culture (Table 1).



Table 1. - First cycle program units and contents

Grade	Unit	Contents
First	Games	Aimed to develop BMS (throwing, catching, running, jumping)
	Rhythmic activities	Rhythmic and traditional games
Second	Games	Aimed to develop BMS (throwing, catching, running, jumping, and movements with objects, popular and traditional games)
	Rhythmic activities	Body expression, rhythmic and traditional games
Third	Games	Aimed to develop BMS (throwing, catching, running, jumping, combined games)
	Rhythmic activities	Body expression, communication, rhythmic and traditional games, formation of values
Fourth	Games	Aimed to develop HMS (Pre-sports games: basketball, handball, baseball, soccer, volleyball in game situations)

Results of the survey of Physical Education teachers:

The survey consisted of three questions:

What do you understand by traditional games? The two female teachers of Physical Education (100%) proved gross knowledge of the concept of traditional games and some of their features, particularly that they are transmitted from generation to generation.

In the second question *Do you think that traditional games are important? Why?* the two teachers referred to the importance of traditional games, arguing that they constitute part of a country's culture, transmit values, and they can be used at any moment without many resources.

When asked if they used traditional games in their lessons, and to explain, only 1 teacher (50%) said that she includes them in the Physical Education lesson, mainly when dealing with coordinating capacities through chants by children who hold their hands closing a circle.

Analysis of the student survey

It consisted of three very simple questions.



Do you know what traditional games are? A total of 19 students (61.3%) expressed some knowledge about traditional games, whereas 12 students (38.7 %) did not know.

When asked to mention the name of some traditional games they had played, all students mentioned at least one game. The boys referred to the tops mostly, while the girls often talked about the blind hen.

In the second question, *have you ever played any traditional games in the Physical Education lesson?* a number of 27 students said *Yes* (87.1 %).

Methodological requisites for the selection and application of traditional games.

It is helpful to come across guidance and analysis of the following methodological guidelines regarding traditional games:

Game presentation: To mention the name of the game.

Game details: It will be done right after the presentation, and it will consist of a conversation or narration by the educator to stimulate student interest in the activity. Occasionally, the success of the traditional game will depend on proper motivation. Moreover, this explanation should be simple and understandable.

Organization: It is related to the distribution of participants, in the manner the teacher has planned, and considering their needs, objective, and the aids available.

Hand-outs: These consist of handing out the necessary tools for the game, provided they do not pose any dangers to the children.

Demonstration: The game will be performed by the teacher (along with one or two children) so that the activity can be fully understood.



Explanation of the rules: It will take place during the practical execution of the game, which will include the rules of the game (obligations and rights). Emphasis will be made on their compliance for a successful outcome.

Development: It consists of the execution of the game until its final stage is completed, and it will not start until all the children have understood the rules.

Variants: Upon the conclusion of the game, the teacher may include variants, or ask the students if they can provide alternatives to the game depending on their motivations and tastes.

Assessment: It must be assessed according to the rules and the objective of the game.

A proposal of traditional games for different stages of the lesson.

At the beginning of the lesson:

Traditional game No. 1.

Name: *The Kangaroo, elephant.*

Objective: To work on quick reactions.

Participants: Third-grade children.

Materials: Not necessary.

Organization: A circle.

Development: A pupil will take to the middle of the circle and will point to another player. Then will say *Kangaroo* and will place his or her arms in front making a bag, like a kangaroo. If they say *elephant*, the student will place his or her hands making a trunk, and the ones on the right and left will make the ears.



Rules: The student should have to react quickly, otherwise, on the third failed time will have to fulfill a task. When the children are small, it should not include disqualifying.

Variants: The number of animals or objects can be increased to imitate other animals or objects.

Classification: Small.

Part of the lesson: Beginning.

Other activities include Breaks, camping, neighborhood, etc.

Traditional game No. 2.

Name: *The tagged*.

Objective: To work on agility.

Participants: Third-grade children.

Materials: Banners.

Organization: The students will be scattered within a space marked by four banners; one of them should catch the rest of the group.

Development: At the teacher's mark, the game begins; when a player is caught, they must remain still with spread legs. The rest of the group will try to save the motionless player by going through their spread legs.

Rules: The students should not run outside the area limits.

Variants: Suggested by the class.

Classification: Small.

Values: Honesty and comradeship.



Part of the lesson: Beginning.

Other activities include Breaks, camping, neighborhood, etc.

Traditional game No. 3.

Name: *Figure me out*.

Objectives: To work on perceptions, memory, attention, imagination.

Organization: A circle.

Development: The game consists of singing the following song:

Song:

Figure out my head (repeated twice).

Figure out my elbows (repeated twice).

Figure out my head and my two elbows (once).

Figure out my waist (twice).

Figure out my head, my two elbows, my waist (once).

Figure out my knees (twice).

Figure out my head and my two elbows, my waist (once).

A step forward (once).

A step backward (once).

Figure out my head, my two elbows, my waist, my knee, a step forward, a step backward (once).

Find out my shaking it (once).

(Everything is repeated and then, *figure out my shaking out*).

Rules: Every step should be fulfilled.

Classification: Small.

Values: Solidarity, and responsibility.



Part of the lesson: Beginning.

Other activities include Breaks, camping, and recreational activities in the community.

Traditional game No. 4.

Name: *The tagged.*

Objective: To work on agility.

Organization: The students will be scattered within a space marked by four banners; one of them should catch the rest of the group.

Development: at the teacher's mark, the catcher will try to tag the rest of the class. The tagged player will replace the previous catcher.

Rules: The students should not run outside the area limits. If the children are small, they should not be disqualified.

Variants: A chain can be made; the tagged player may become the catcher's sidekick.

Classification: Small.

Values: Honesty.

Part of the lesson: Beginning.

Other activities include breaks, camping, community, etc.

The following games are recommended for the main stage of the lesson:

Traditional game No. 5.

Name: *Pulling out onions.*

Objective: To work on strength and endurance.



Participants: Third-grade children.

Aids: Not necessary.

Organization: Teams making rows.

Development: a group of players sits on the floor with spread legs, and one of the players stands and will try to raise the last player seated by holding their waist until they are removed from their position, and the same procedure is repeated. When the first player in the row is removed, the lifter sits in the first position in the row, and the last one will become the new lifter. The game ends when every player has pulled out all the *onions*.

Rules: The grip is only by the waist.

Variants: Any suggestions by the players.

Classification: Small.

Values: Collectivism, perseverance.

Part of the lesson: Main part.

Other activities include Camping and recreational activities.

Traditional game No. 6.

Name: *The Giant Sandal*.

Objective: To work on leg strength and quickness.

Participants: Third-grade children.

Aids: Leather straps or rubber inner tubes, wooden boards.

Organization: Teams making rows.



Description: Six leather straps or inner tube bands are attached to each of the two boards (5cm x 10 cm x 2 m), and four-six players slide their feet on the straps as if they were two giant sandals. The feet on each side. The players will place their hands on the front player's shoulders and will drag their feet altogether.

Rules: the hands should not be moved always from the shoulders, and the feet must be held by the straps.

Variants: Indoors, using pieces of a rug, cloth, cardboard, etc. Movements can be forward, backward, sideward, etc.

Classification: Small.

Values: Discipline, responsibility.

Part of the lesson: Main part.

Other activities include Recreational activities, camping, etc.

Traditional game No. 7.

Name: *Jumping in bags*.

Objective: To work on agility.

Participants: Third-grade children.

Aids: Chalks.

Organization: The teacher divides the group into teams, then into two rows, one facing the other. Then the area is marked with two parallel lines 10 m from each other. The already divided teams face each other, behind the lines.



Description: The first player of each team will move toward the players facing them. At the 10 m line, the player will deliver the bag and return to the original position. The activity will be repeated until the game is over. The winner is the team that ends first.

Rules: The players should not go out of the bag until the distance is completed.

Variants: One team may stay in a single row, combining the bag with another skill on the way back.

Classification: Small.

Values: Discipline, perseverance.

Part of the lesson: Main part.

Other activities include Camping, recreational activities, etc.

Traditional game No. 8.

Name: *The handkerchief*.

Objective: To work on quick reactions.

Participants: Third-grade children.

Aids: Chalks.

Organization: Teams making rows.

Development: One of the players holds the handkerchief and tells a number. The players with the numbers on each team will move forward. They stop near the handkerchief without crossing the line and will try to seize the handkerchief and run with it to their base without being touched by the opposing team player.



Rules: To score a point, the players will have to make it to the row carrying the handkerchief without being touched by the opponent.

Variants: Several numbers could be called to promote teamwork, or perform mathematical operations to get the numbers.

Classification: Small.

Contents: Gymnastics, game.

Values: Discipline, responsibility.

Part of the lesson: Main part.

Other activities include Camping, and recreational activities.

CONCLUSIONS

The inclusion of traditional games in the Physical Education class in elementary education contributed to the preservation of the students' cultural identity and physical-cognitive development.

This study demonstrated that in the Physical Education lesson, the introduction of traditional games is still poor, though they have been included as part of the third-grade content. The traditional games were selected based on their usage rate, considering their objectives, in every part of the Physical Education lesson.



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