



## The Minas Gerais Reference Curriculum and the Physical Education: between new and old disagreements<sup>1</sup>

*O Currículo Referência de Minas Gerais e a Educação Física:  
entre novos e velhos desencontros*

*El Currículum de Referencia de Minas Gerais y la Educación Física: e  
ntre nuevos y viejos desacuerdos*

Rebeca Signorelli Miguel<sup>2</sup>  
Universidade Estadual de Campinas

Bruno Modesto Silvestre<sup>3</sup>  
University of Pernambuco

**Abstract:** This study aimed to analyze the Minas Gerais Reference Curriculum (CRMG), Brazil, specifically the session given to Physical Education for elementary school. We sought to understand and analyze the CRMG launch history, even the main theoretical-methodological foundations presented by the curriculum. The documents and articulation between the CRMG and the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) were analyzed. The theory of knowledge that guided this process was the historical-dialectical materialism, as a way of understanding the movements of reality and to do the concrete analysis of the educational policies in vogue during the period of approvals and implementation of these curricular policies. Similarities were found between the documents mentioned that reveal the direction of Brazilian educational policies in the period. Finally, it was also possible to notice the theoretical-methodological weakness in the proposal for Physical Education at CRMG.

**Keywords:** Educational Policy; Basic Education; School Physical Education; Curriculum.

**Resumo:** A pesquisa teve por objetivo analisar o Currículo Referência de Minas Gerais (CRMG) e, de forma específica, a configuração do componente curricular Educação Física para o Ensino Fundamental. Buscou-se a compreensão e a análise do histórico de lançamento do CRMG, assim como os principais embasamentos teórico-metodológicos apresentados pelo currículo. Foram analisados os documentos e as articulações entre o CRMG e a Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC). A teoria do conhecimento que orientou esse processo foi o materialismo histórico-dialético, como forma de apreender os movimentos do real e realizar a análise concreta das políticas educacionais, em voga, no período das aprovações e das implementações dessas políticas curriculares. Foram constatadas similaridades entre o CRMG e a BNCC, revelando o direcionamento das políticas educacionais brasileiras no período analisado. Por fim, também foi possível notar a fragilidade teórico-metodológica na proposta para a Educação Física no CRMG.

**Palavras-chave:** Política Educacional; Educação Básica; Educação Física Escolar; Currículo.

<sup>1</sup> Translation of the original article from Portuguese to English was carried out by Espaço da Escrita (Unicamp).

<sup>2</sup> PhD in Education from the Universidade Estadual de Campinas (Unicamp). Universidade Estadual de Campinas (Unicamp), Campinas-SP, Brazil. E-mail: [rebecasm@unicamp.br](mailto:rebecasm@unicamp.br); Lattes Curriculum: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/5324660165932015>; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8058-2527>.

<sup>3</sup> PhD in Physical Education from the State University of Campinas (Unicamp). University of Pernambuco (UPE), Recife, PE, Brazil. E-mail: [bruno.modesto@upe.br](mailto:bruno.modesto@upe.br); Lattes Curriculum: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/4930064350445706>; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4147-1306>.



**Resumen:** El objetivo de la investigación fue analizar el Currículo de Referencia de Minas Gerais (CRMG), em Brasil, y, específicamente, la configuración del componente curricular de Educación Física en la educación básica. Se propuso comprender y analizar la historia de formulación del CRMG, así como sus principales fundamentos teórico-metodológicos. Se analizaron los documentos y como el CRMG se articula con la BNCC. La teoría del conocimiento en la cual se basa ese análisis fue el materialismo histórico-dialéctico, como una vía de comprender los movimientos de la realidad y realizar un análisis concreto de las políticas educativas vigentes a lo largo del período de aprobación e implementación de dichas políticas curriculares. Se ha encontrado similitudes entre el CRMG y la BNCC, revelando el rumbo de las políticas educativas brasileñas en el período analizado. Finalmente, también se constató la debilidad teórico-metodológica en la propuesta de Educación Física en el CRMG.

**Palabras clave:** Política Educativa; Educación Básica; Educación Física Escolar; Currículo.

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**Received:** July 13, 2024

**Accepted:** May 8, 2025

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## Introduction

The recent history of Brazilian curricular policy has been marked by the development and implementation of the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC). In the interim, the BNCC for Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education, launched in 2017, stands out, just as the BNCC for High School released in 2018, simultaneously with the High School Reform. The formulation of these documents followed an erratic trajectory, constituting a regression in the country's educational policies (Beltrão; Taffarel; Teixeira, 2020; Signorelli Miguel, 2022).

The construction of a BNCC had already been envisioned in the Law of Directives and Bases of National Education (LDB)<sup>4</sup>, which stipulated the need for the federal government to establish a national curricular foundation, while allowing each locality to adapt and diversify its curriculum according to its specific context (Brasil, 1996). Thus, states and municipalities were responsible for adapting and instituting their own curricula to guide pedagogical practice within their educational networks<sup>5</sup>. However, it was only in 2014, with the formulation of the second National Education Plan (PNE) and roughly three decades after the LDB's enactment, that the creation of the BNCC became a strategic element within three national education goals<sup>6</sup> (Brazil, 2014).

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<sup>4</sup> "Art. 26. Curricula for early childhood education, elementary education, and secondary education must have a common national basis, to be complemented, in each education system and in each school, by a diversified component, as required by the regional and local characteristics of society, culture, economy, and students" (Brasil, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> Articles 10 and 11 of the LDB address the responsibility of states and municipalities in providing public education. States must ensure, in collaboration with municipalities, elementary and middle education and offer high school to all who demand it. Municipalities, in turn, must guarantee early childhood education and elementary education. (Brasil, 1996).

<sup>6</sup> Goal 2 - Universalize 9-year elementary and middle school education for the entire population aged 6 to 14 and ensure that at least 95% of students complete this stage at the recommended age, by the end of the PNE period.



Following the approval of the PNE in 2014 and the publication of Ordinance No. 592 of 2015, which established the expert committee responsible for drafting a national curricular framework, political movements toward the development of the BNCC intensified. However, they took on new contours following the 2016 coup and Michel Temer's rise to the presidency. Research analyzing the BNCC's construction process indicated that it was marked by a series of contradictions—from the formation of expert teams to shifts in direction after the coup. Furthermore, during a period of political retreat, the formulation and implementation of the BNCC revealed a lack of popular participation and a return to curriculum models based on competencies and skills (Aguiar, 2018; Beltrão; Taffarel; Teixeira, 2020; Freitas, 2018; Gama; Prates, 2020; Neira; Souza Junior, 2016; Sena *et al.*, 2016).

It was in this context that, in 2018, the Reference Curriculum of Minas Gerais (CRMG) was released. Based on the BNCC, the CRMG established a curriculum that provides guidelines to the state of Minas Gerais (MG) education system—from elementary school through high school education—regarding the knowledge and learning objectives to be addressed in the state's schools<sup>7</sup>.

Accordingly, this study is justified both by the school's clear influence on social life and by the need to understand the implementation of the CRMG and its connections with the processes stemming from the BNCC's development.

In light of this, the study aimed to analyze the CRMG and the configuration of the section dedicated to physical education for elementary education within that curricular document. More specifically, it sought to examine the historical context of the CRMG's release, as well as the theoretical and methodological foundations outlined by the curriculum in general and for the physical education component in particular.

To achieve these objectives—as detailed in the methodological pathway—the study analyzed both the documents and the articulation between the CRMG and the BNCC. The theory of knowledge that guided this process was historical-dialectical materialism, as a means of apprehending movements of reality and conducting a concrete analysis of society and of the educational policies in force during the period in which these curricular policies were approved and implemented.

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Goal 3 - By 2016, universalize school attendance for the entire population aged 15 to 17 and raise the net enrollment rate in secondary education to 85% by the end of the PNE period. Goal 7 - Promote the quality of basic education at all stages and in all modalities, improving school flow and learning in order to achieve the following national means for the Ideb (Brasil, 2014).

<sup>7</sup> "Following the guidelines of Opinion CNE/CP No. 2 of 2017 and the LDB, the Reference Curriculum of the state of Minas Gerais has a diversified section integrated into the document, respecting local diversity and adapting to each context" (Minas Gerais, 2019, p. 152).



Beyond the methodological approach and final considerations, the discussion is divided into four additional sections presenting the construction process of the CRMG, its guiding principles, the conceptualization of physical education within the curriculum, and, finally, the way this component appears and is organized within the CRMG. The study identified many similarities between the CRMG and the BNCC. In addition, it did not identify a solid theoretical-methodological foundation to support the CRMG as an educational proposal for physical education in Minas Gerais. It is noteworthy that the CRMG maintains a close relationship with the curriculum proposal previously developed by the state of Minas Gerais—the Common Basic Curriculum (CBC).

### **Methodological pathway**

This study is grounded in the principle that educational policies must be analyzed through a dialectical lens, understood within their complex and contradictory processes of production and reproduction, and situated within the totality of concrete reality (Boschetti, 2009). Accordingly, historical-dialectical materialism was adopted as the epistemological and methodological framework for the analyses conducted herein.

Educational policies are approached as social policies, since they are developed by the State to meet demands related to the right to education—a right enshrined in Brazil's Federal Constitution of 1988. Social policies are defined as “a process and result of complex and contradictory relations established between the State and civil society, within the framework of class struggle and conflict that permeates the processes of capitalist production and reproduction” (Behring; Boschetti, 2011, p. 36).

According to Saviani (2016), studying educational policies as social policies entails recognizing that they are a product of relations shaped within the capitalist State. Therefore:

To the extent that this type of society is organized around a State—thus inherently capitalist—the ‘economic policy’ driven by this State will favor private interests over collective ones, aiming at the development and consolidation of the capitalist order. This gives rise to the antisocial character of ‘economic policy’, whose effects, paradoxically, tend to destabilize rather than consolidate that order. To counterbalance these effects, the State produces ‘social policy,’ encompassing actions in health, social security and assistance, culture, communications, and education (Saviani, 2016, p. 1).

This study relied on document analysis (Marconi; Lakatos, 2004), with a focus on the CRMG and publicly available texts regarding its development, as published on the



website of Minas Gerais's State Department of Education. The BNCC and CBC were also analyzed, as deemed necessary based on the analysis of the CRMG, in order to understand the connections, similarities, and differences between these curriculum documents and the CRMG.

### **Construction and publication of the CRMG**

The primary sources supporting this section include materials available on the CRMG's official website<sup>8</sup> and the "Final Report" documenting its development process. Aligned with the chosen methodology, which conceives reality as a whole synthesized from multiple determinations, this study asserts the need to grasp the fabric, conceptualization, and implementation of the curriculum as a means to analyze the document itself.

The reviewed materials indicate efforts to ensure parity among the National Union of Municipal Education Leaders (UNDIME) in Minas Gerais, the State Department of Education (SEE-MG), and partner entities involved in drafting the CRMG. Unlike the BNCC, which is mandatory across Brazil's education network, the CRMG was implemented through voluntary municipal adoption. According to official documents, it reached 819 municipalities, which corresponds to 96% of the state.

To develop the CRMG, Minas Gerais joined the Support Program for the Implementation of the Common National Curriculum Base (ProBNCC), established by Ordinance No. 331 of April 5, 2018—a partnership between the Ministry of Education (MEC) and UNDIME. The program offered technical and financial support for crafting state-specific versions of a curriculum aligned with the BNCC, while allowing for local curricular adaptations. Through ProBNCC, Minas Gerais was awarded 31 grants to organize its work, beginning with the *Conselho Estadual de Educação* (State Board of Education) (CEE-MG) providing editing teams with guidance on adjusting the BNCC to the CBC.

There were five stages in the development of the CRMG: (1) Preparation; (2) Drafting the preliminary version; (3) Municipal meetings and public consultation; (4) Writing the final version; (5) Finalization and distribution. The Preparation (Stage 1) involved study of the BNCC by the drafting team and teachers from schools in Minas Gerais, as well as training sessions held in Belo Horizonte and Brasília-DF. In this stage, the "D-day" was organized, with participation from more than 120,000 professionals and

<sup>8</sup> Available at: <https://curriculoreferencia.educacao.mg.gov.br/>. Accessed on: June, 2. 2025.



660 municipalities. The Drafting of the Preliminary Version (Stage 2) resulted from D-day and the Preparation stage, with contributions from the universities PUC-Minas, UEMG, and UFMG, following fifteen meetings held by the drafting team.

Between August and September 2018, the Municipal meetings and public consultation (Stage 3) were conducted in a manner that enabled society's contribution to the CRMG. According to public records, there were more than 404,000 contributions, which gave rise to the Writing the final version (Stage 4), based on criteria outlined by the team. In 2019, the Finalization and distribution (Stage 5) marked the official launch of the CRMG.

According to the final report, the curriculum development process was not an innovation for the state of Minas Gerais. Since 2005, competency and skills development—later reinforced by the BNCC—had already been central to the curriculum guiding state schools. Thus, the CRMG involved adjustments to the CBC, especially in terms of skill sequences across grade levels. However, despite looking like a reworking of the CBC, the CRMG inherently reflects the contradictions of the BNCC, corroborating the national approach to educational policy.

From this perspective, it is essential to note that the BNCC emerged during a period of political tension in Brazil. In the realm of educational policy, Gama and Prates (2020) describe this period as one of “retrenchment,” particularly following the 2016 coup, when the National Education Council (CNE) was reconfigured, excluding participation from social movements and civil society representatives. These authors also highlight the BNCC’s mechanisms for controlling pedagogical work as another example of corporate education reform’s advance (Gama; Prates, 2020).

Freitas (2018), in discussing Brazil’s corporate education reformers, identified a global movement tied to rentier financial capital, which imposes standardization, testing, and accountability, while neglecting diversity. In this light, the CRMG largely incorporates the characteristics imposed on the BNCC, an educational policy developed from a political arrangement that managed to revive and implement neoliberal ideals in national education.

### **Guiding principles of the CRMG and the competency-based model**

The first chapter of the CRMG (Introductory texts) is a compilation of materials aimed at promoting a broad understanding of the document. It presents the concepts and values expected by the state of Minas Gerais from its schools. The text states that educators should become familiar with the CRMG in order to grasp its principles and



gain the ability to apply them in the school setting. It affirms the core principles of the curriculum: the right to quality learning, equity, recognition and appreciation of diversity, inclusion, democratic and participatory management, and the holistic promotion of education.

Much like the BNCC, the CRMG is justified on the basis of “quality education with equity”. This principle, according to the document, guides public education policy and addresses the need for a curricular foundation for students who move between regions or across different school networks, which are particularly relevant in the state with the highest number of municipalities in Brazil (Minas Gerais, 2019).

The CRMG explicitly states that it constitutes the curriculum framework for implementing the BNCC in Minas Gerais. Therefore, it affirms that actions involving the BNCC, CRMG, and the school’s Pedagogical Political Project (PPP) must be aligned. The PPP serves as the “school’s internal reference, outlining its specific goals and how they relate to the curriculum” (Minas Gerais, 2019, p. 17).

[...] t is expected that the BNCC, CRMG, and the PPP of each school offer pathways for the classes to be conceptualized, planned, and carried out based on the principles of group work, respect for differences, overcoming challenges, and the full exercise of autonomy (Minas Gerais, 2019, p. 16).

Although the BNCC does not reference schools’ PPPs, it is notable that the CRMG highlights the importance of this document in the pedagogical reality of schools<sup>9</sup>. The PPP is a key document to be collectively constructed in each school through a process of reflection on its educational intent. According to Veiga (2009), it is the role of the school’s leadership team (pedagogical coordination or guidance, and administration) to coordinate the development of the PPP as a document that articulates theoretical-methodological and evaluative foundations, learning objectives and methodologies, as well as conceptions of education, society, and human development. In turn, teachers are responsible for organizing and executing the lesson plans—concrete manifestations of the PPP—within the reality of each classroom (Veiga, 2009).

As previously noted, the CRMG adopts a competency and skills-based model. Its ten general competencies are fully aligned with those set forth in the BNCC. Thus, the CRMG defines competency as “the mobilization of knowledge (concepts and procedures)” (Minas Gerais, 2019, p. 15). Skills are understood as “cognitive and social-emotional practices” (p. 15),

<sup>9</sup> Note that in other parts, such as the part on physical education, the CRMG makes references to the PPP (Minas Gerais, 2019).



while attitudes and values are intended to “respond to complex everyday demands, aiming toward full citizenship and engagement in the world of work” (Minas Gerais, 2019, p. 15).

This so-called competency model stems from and is nourished by an economicist perspective on educational processes, grounded in efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness, ultimately emphasizing performance and a conception of practice detached from its theoretical foundations, giving rise to a reduced notion of know-how. (Silva, 2019, p. 133).

In both the BNCC and the CRMG, the promotion of competencies and skills tends to occur at the expense of educational knowledge and content. According to Catini (2018), this reflects a subordination of content to form, in which the right to learning materializes through the erosion of the right to educational content. In a similar vein, Freitas (2018) underscores that the right to be educated is reduced to the right to learn—a point also emphasized by Dourado and Siqueira (2019, p. 300):

Another risk tied to the standardization of a curriculum base lies in the narrow logic of the ‘right to learn.’ This is not simply about having the right to learn, but about the ‘right to education’, since learning is an inherent condition of the educational act. Thus, to speak of the right to education is broader than the right to learn, as the former presupposes a quality educational institution with valued teachers, collectively constructed curricula, and appropriate infrastructure enabling the realization of a democratic PPP—not merely limited to learning needs.

Within this logic of standardization and verification, some disciplines gain greater prominence over others. The latter remain vulnerable to less coherent and consolidated pedagogical conceptions. This is the case of Physical Education, discussed in the next section.

### **Physical Education in the CRMG and its theoretical-methodological foundations**

As in the BNCC, Physical Education is placed within the field of languages in the CRMG<sup>10</sup>. It appears in Chapter 4, which covers the area of “languages and their technologies,” encompassing arts, physical education, Brazilian Sign Language, English, and Portuguese. Chapter 7, structured in six sections, addresses Physical Education specifically as a curricular component.

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<sup>10</sup> In Brazilian documents, Physical Education has been included in the area of languages since the publication of the National Curriculum Parameters (PCN).



However, the justification for including Physical Education in the field of languages differs between the two documents. In the BNCC, bodily practices are understood as expressive possibilities and “cultural texts subject to reading and production” (Brasil, 2018, p. 214). In the CRMG, they are simply mentioned as “verbal (oral and written), non-verbal (bodily, visual, sound), and digital,” or referred to as “language modalities” (Minas Gerais, 2019).

At another point in the chapter, the notion of “body language” is revisited, emphasizing its place in the school context. It is expressed through “dance, play, games, sports, physical activities, drama, music, touch, rhythm—in short, through countless forms of bodily expression” (Minas Gerais, 2019, p. 346). Thus, the concept of language adopted by the CRMG revolves around the body and does not necessarily refer to the idea of bodily culture as a historically and socially constructed expression, a notion well established in Physical Education scholarship (Coletivo de Autores, 1992). In other words, Physical Education’s classification within the field of Languages in the CRMG is not founded on a conceptual understanding of its object of study.

Furthermore, whereas the BNCC defines the object of study in Physical Education as bodily culture of movement, the CRMG uses the term **bodily culture of movements**. In reviewing the academic literature of the field, no theoretical-methodological approach supports this variation, suggesting that the CRMG is not aligned with any specific framework within Physical Education.

It is a fact that throughout the CRMG document, an attempt is made to characterize, define, or conceptualize school physical education. However, such attempts appear disorganized regarding the curriculum’s presentation. All statements that could approximate a conceptualization of physical education are made generically. They present only undefined characteristics and adjectives, as in the following excerpts:

Every student participating in physical education classes in basic education should have the opportunity to recognize and expand their body repertoire, guided by principles and values that are supportive, inclusive, and sustainable, to understand the human production of body practices. They should understand them as mutable, alive, a result of culture and social interactions, and thus critically and creatively reflect and act upon them (Minas Gerais, 2019, p. 341).

Physical education, as a curricular component, a privileged time and space for the improvement of motor/corporal, mental/cognitive, affective/emotional, social/cultural, and spiritual/existential dimensions must be worked on and developed to collaborate with students’ holistic development (Minas Gerais, 2019, p. 342).



[...]it is up to this discipline to study and problematize knowledge about the body and its manifestations produced in our culture (sports, games and play, gymnastics, dance, and expressive movements), with a view to seeking quality of life and its full experience (Minas Gerais, 2019, p. 344).

Therefore, the document fails to promote a discussion followed by an understanding of school physical education, something that should be foundational to providing a path for the study of this curricular component. Furthermore, it is possible to verify how the object of study of physical education does not centrally appear delimiting or characterizing the curricular component. This aligns with the CRMG's lack of commitment to the physical education teaching content, in a movement to overemphasize the procedural dimension of education<sup>11</sup>, reiterating the competency model and emptying the component's specific knowledge, with which the school should be committed to studying/teaching.

The CRMG presents 10 specific competencies for the physical education curricular component. In comparison with the (also 10) competencies explicit in the BNCC, some modifications are notorious. The changes proposed by the CRMG are in the realm of qualifications or adjectivizations. Inclusion, solidarity, cooperation, playfulness, responsibility, well-being, sustainability, and awareness are some words that appear amidst the competencies, as novelties brought by the CRMG. However, it must be emphasized that such elements are not presented as content to be worked on in school physical education, but rather in a way that adjectivizes the required competencies.

One example can be evidenced in the use of playfulness and cooperation, dear concepts to physical education. In competency nine, the CRMG proposes: "Recognize access to body practices as a citizen's right, proposing and producing inclusive, playful, and cooperative alternatives for their realization in community contexts" (Minas Gerais, 2019, p. 570—emphasis added). It is noted that the highlighted part refers to the change in competency relative to the BNCC, which shows that what could be mentioned as concepts to be worked on in school physical education appears as adjectivizations, without any explanation or detailing. As stated, this is not an isolated issue; it occurs in other passages describing competencies, bringing as adjectivizations themes worthy of being worked on in school physical education. Inclusion, playfulness, and cooperation

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<sup>11</sup> The understanding of the teaching-learning process through attitudinal, procedural, and conceptual dimensions promotes fragmentation of teaching and critical analysis of content embedded in the whole of concrete reality. This conception was truly present in the field of Physical Education, especially in the 1990s, based on Zabala's studies carried out by Darido et al. (2002).



are elements requiring greater depth and should not be used as if they were just adjectives. This fact warns of the emptying of teaching content characteristic of the competency model with a focus on expected behaviors.

The document's limited discussion regarding the specific content of physical education is linked to the competency model discussed in the previous section. That fact can also be evidenced as the document states that the most important thing is to "go beyond" specific knowledge, without even having discussed the content. In this way, the curriculum's greater concern with the attitudinal dimension<sup>12</sup>, becomes clear, presented generically and without depth, offering few concrete possibilities for teacher action:

[...]more than possessing knowledge, they know how to put it to the service of individual, collective goals, objectives, plans, and needs, know how to solve problems, create innovative, and inclusive solutions, are able to express themselves and communicate assertively and respectfully. In short, they are able to contribute to the construction of peaceful, ethical, and supportive relationships, for the sake of a more just, sustainable, and happy society (Minas Gerais, 2019, p. 342).

The more direct guidance offered by the document to teachers' pedagogical practice emphasizes that:

[...]as education professionals, we should always be attentive and reflective, constantly constructing and reviewing principles, practices, and values, seeking coherence between our discourses and formative intentions and our pedagogical practices (Minas Gerais, 2019, p. 340).

[...]we must value educational strategies guided by experimentation, experience, practice, and enjoyment. We must overcome understandings that promote the theory/practice dichotomy, building an educational *praxis* that values the specificities of school physical education pedagogical actions (Minas Gerais, 2019, p. 343).

Both excerpts do not deal with concrete points and/or with theoretical-methodological depth to guide teachers' pedagogical practice. Once again, it is identified that propositions dear to physical education are cited without depth and without possibility for discussion. In this last excerpt, the dichotomy between theory and practice is not brought to light for debate. Without this, the excerpt can be misinterpreted, as if physical education were sufficient by its practice (but, again, without discussing what that practice is).

<sup>12</sup> Also in the same sense, Darido et al. (2002) discuss it.



Gasparin (2009) states that practice “is not reduced only to what students do, feel, and think [...] it is always, also, an expression of the general social practice of which the group is a part” (p. 6). The author explains three steps of the dialectical theory of knowledge. Initially, “seeing” social practice, secondly, theorizing about it, and finally, returning to practice. “After passing through theory, i.e., through the abstract, students can position themselves differently in relation to practice, having modified their way of understanding it. [...] Their thinking and acting can take on a transformative perspective of reality” (Gasparin, 2009, p. 7).

What is not stated in the document, regarding the overcome of the dichotomy between theory and practice, implies that there is no theory without practice, nor the other way around. It is precisely because of the existence of the real and the practical that theory is formulated, with the intention of explaining reality and returning to it in the dialectical movement of overcoming or modifying the real and the concrete. The characteristic of bodily movement in the objects of study of physical education, body culture, and body practices, gives the (erroneous) impression that it is the (only) practical discipline in school. It must be revealed that this curricular component, like any other, is constituted of theory and practice inseparably. Moreover, the educational *praxis* cited, but not discussed or explained in the CRMG, would be precisely the necessary condition for the dialectical movement between theory and practice in a perspective of transforming reality.

### **The organization of Physical Education in CRMG: between CBC and BNCC**

In the subchapter titled *Diretrizes para o ensino da Educação Física* (Guidelines for the teaching of Physical Education,), the CBC is cited without any mediation, meaning the section is entirely composed of verbatim excerpts from the document launched in 2008. Once again, the CRMG falls short in terms of organization, as in the “Guidelines...” item, there are several CBC subchapters that address many physical education topics.

Vargas, Cunha Jr., and Moreira (2019) analyzed the Minas Gerais CBC with an emphasis on the section dedicated to physical education. The authors highlight that teaching work is neglected in the CBC, with teachers “[...] seen as mere propagators of a predetermined curricular political structure, also configuring an accelerated and fragmented flow of recontextualizations” (Vargas; Cunha Jr; Moreira, 2019, p. 22). Therefore, teachers are left with only the implementation of a curriculum that is part of intense curricular reforms in Brazil dating back to the 1990s, based on neoliberalism,



education as a commodity, and criteria of productivity and standardization guided by the dictates of international organizations (Vargas, Cunha Jr.; Moreira, 2019).

Research conducted by Garcia-Reis and Callian (2021) indicates that the CRMG also considers teachers as “actors in the educational process” and thus “are not considered real actors in the teaching process, with their own motives and intentions; they are placed as executors of the principles, contents, and methodologies prescribed therein” (p. 20). The fact that the CRMG “copies” large excerpts from the CBC shows the continuity of Minas Gerais curricular policies in the way teachers are treated and considered in the teaching process. See the definitions of the teachers’ role:

Given this, we identify that the State assumed the role of establishing the objectives of the Minas Gerais educational system and defining the quality criteria to be pursued, while institutions and teachers are responsible for deciding the best way to respond to governmental expectations (Garcia-Reis; Callian, 2021, p. 21).

The large excerpt from the CBC still present in the CRMG raises relevant issues for physical education. In relation to teaching content and/or pedagogical conception, quality of life and playfulness assume centrality. Physical education appears with the purpose (reduced or overestimated) of promoting quality of life. The “quality of life as a requirement for full bodily experience,” as the document states, is explained in opposition to the conception of health as the absence of disease and from a perspective of “general well-being of individuals.” This implies “different factors that act on the living conditions of these people, such as the determinants of biological, psychological, social, cultural, economic, and environmental dimensions” (Minas Gerais, 2019, p. 345).

Understanding school physical education as serving quality of life, even if it is announced that there are various elements related to it, refers to a reduced view of this curricular component. Precisely because the concept is broad and not specific to this area of knowledge, all access to education and social rights are part of building a quality life. Therefore, it is effective physical education—one that fulfills its objectives within the school context—that can promote access to the right to education (insofar as this curricular component is concerned). However, there remains a lack of clear understanding of what constitutes effective physical education in the school setting.

Regarding playfulness, the concept appears related to playing and, this time, playing is understood as a language, differently from the understanding previously presented:



[...] play, historically constituted as a language intrinsic to human beings, must occupy a central place in pedagogical practice, particularly in physical education classes. This includes engaging in play in diverse forms, times, and spaces; constructing toys; using a variety of objects in playful activities and re-signifying them through imagination; and creating multiple ways to discuss, invent, or modify the rules of sports, games, play, dance, and gymnastics. Through play, students symbolically represent reality, thereby appropriating and constructing meanings, values, and knowledge related to culture. (Minas Gerais, 2019, p. 347).

The document understands “Playfulness as the essence of bodily experience” (p. 347) in a comprehension of the playful endowed with two basic characteristics: pleasure and the exercise of freedom. The playful experience is understood as a guiding principle for educational actions, aiming to make teaching “pleasant and meaningful.” Although the importance of this is mentioned in all disciplines, it is clear that the topic has greater relevance when it comes to physical education. It is possible to observe that playfulness is still not presented or discussed as teaching content, but rather as an adjective of the experience provided by physical education.

Concluding the excerpt taken from the CBC, other themes gain prominence: the experience of rights, democracy and citizenship, and ethics and aesthetics. These are a few paragraphs intended to affirm the relevance of these elements in educational practice.

In Subchapter “7.5—The Curricular Component in the Early and Late Grades of Elementary School,” physical education is presented as a discipline centered on the experience of bodily practices. This experience is expected to be imbued with significant themes that “stimulate reflective, critical, and creative capacities, essential for citizenship education” [...]. It must be “based on playful, supportive, and inclusive values and principles” (p. 350), “serving to build attitudes and values that foster a sense of belonging to the physical world, as well as individual self-recognition and the capacity for collective action” (p. 349). As such, the specific content and disciplinary foundations of physical education are not placed at the center. Instead, physical education is framed as a curricular component whose role is to promote bodily practices enriched by positive and value-laden attributes within the school context.

The concern with the discussion about gender is brought up only once in the document: in four lines, followed by a generic paragraph about pedagogical practice aimed at overcoming inequalities in bodily practices, aiming for them to be “in favor of health, leisure, socialization, coexistence, performance, overcoming, achievements, etc.” (Minas Gerais, 2019, p. 350). In the cited study, it is emphasized that the reference used by the CRMG (Altmann et al., 2018) states that pedagogical practice is not sufficient to deal with gender issues immersed



in bodily practices. Since gender inequality is so intrinsic to the current form of social organization, its combat must extend to other fields beyond teaching action, to ensure equity in other spaces (Altmann et al., 2018).

When addressing Thematic Units in subchapter 7.5.1, it is highlighted that those worked on by the CBC will be reaffirmed—Games and Play, Sports, Gymnastics, Dances—and that two others brought by the BNCC are incorporated into the CRMG: Combat Sports and Adventure Bodily Practices. When presenting the new units, it is stated that creative and innovative ability will also have to be developed by teachers for working mainly with these two “new” thematic units, assuming the absence of spaces and materials. In a curriculum that until then pointed to physical education whose objective was to enable experiences (to the detriment of a deep study of bodily culture), the resolute concern with space and material is coherent. However, a critical and feasible approach to bodily culture does not depend on space and materials, though it acknowledges their value in enhancing teaching quality.

The CRMG does not present bodily practices as objects of study. Instead, it refers to their experience in school as a means of fostering behavioral skills. For example, combat sports are linked to the “mediation of disputes and conflicts in an ethical, honorable, and peaceful manner” (Minas Gerais, 2019, p. 354); dances are associated with the “capacity for authorship and creation” (Minas Gerais, 2019, p. 353); and more boldly, adventure bodily practices are also included in this framework.:

[...] development of essential skills and competencies for our prosperity as a species, understanding ourselves as one of the constituent and constitutive elements of the world, which impacts and is impacted in every choice, action, and established relationship. This ecological and dynamic perception can and should generate respect, recognition, value, and reverence in the relationships established between all living beings (Minas Gerais, 2019, p. 353).

The bodily practice detailed in the CRMG that most closely resembles the presentation of a physical education object of study is sport, in the statement about the need to have “access to the structural and defining concepts of this manifestation.” Furthermore, it is about “at the same time knowing how to position oneself critically, whether as a participant, promoter, or spectator” (Minas Gerais, 2019, p. 352).



For the pedagogical treatment of sport, the CRMG uses the same conception presented by the BNCC: the Theory of Motor Praxiology<sup>13</sup>, which presupposes the internal logic of bodily practices as the main didactic-methodological element. Signorelli Miguel (2022) states that such treatment given to sport in school has limitations, since “sport is always presented following the classification based on the internal dynamics of the modalities and never in its totality as a social phenomenon.” But, he does not fail to emphasize that it is an advance in conferring some curriculum to school physical education, that is, not reducing this curricular component only to the practice of the well-known “fantastic quartet” (football/futsal, volleyball, handball, and basketball) (Signorelli Miguel, 2022).

Still on the treatment of sport, it is also possible to perceive the absence of its consideration as a social right. Signorelli Miguel and Silvestre (2021) emphasize the importance of an education that considers its students as subjects of rights. From this perspective, they state that the reading of sport as a social right is not present in the BNCC. Similarly, it is noted that the CRMG also does not consider sport from this logic.

The last section dedicated to physical education in the CRMG is the “Curricular Organizer.” In it, a big table presents the thematic unit, the object of knowledge, and the skills by year of schooling<sup>14</sup>. The thematic units follow the same order and distribution as those listed by the BNCC.

Although the same objects of knowledge as the BNCC are presented, something more is brought by the CRMG. This occurs in two ways: first, by adding the sports modalities in parentheses when it comes to the classification of sports, which happens in all years when sport is addressed. For example: “mark sports (such as athletics, cycling, swimming, among others). Precision sports (such as archery, golf, bocce, among others)” (Minas Gerais, 2019, p. 358).

The second way is the addition of objects of knowledge, belonging to the thematic units already presented. This is the case, for example, when “sedentary lifestyle” and “health and quality of life” are read, added to the object of knowledge “electronic games,” in the games and play thematic unit of the 6th grade.

<sup>13</sup> “According to Martineli, Vasconcelos, and Almeida (2018), this classification is based on the Theory of Motor Praxiology or Science of Motor Action, developed by Pierre Parlebas (French researcher) based mainly on his influence on Saussure, linguist and philosopher, and Talcott Parsons, who drew on Durkheim and Weber to develop his theory of social systems” (Signorelli Miguel, 2022). (Signorelli Miguel, 2022).

<sup>14</sup> While the BNCC, in the section that organizes the curriculum for each year of elementary and middle school, presents it in cycles—1st and 2nd grades; 3rd to 5th grades; 6th and 7th grades; and 8th and 9th grades—the CRMG structures it on a grade-by-grade basis.



The table below presents the objects of knowledge added by the CRMG compared to those of the BNCC. It is emphasized that no thematic units were inserted by the CRMG. Therefore, all objects of knowledge are presented within those already exposed, always side by side with objects of knowledge also already presented by the BNCC.

Chart 1—Physical Education Knowledge: BNCC and CRMG<sup>15</sup>

BNCC	CRMG
Electronic games	Electronic games. Sedentary lifestyle. Health and quality of life. (6th grade)
Physical conditioning gymnastics	Physical conditioning gymnastics. Physical exercises. Physical activities. Health and quality of life. (6th grade)
Physical conditioning gymnastics	Physical conditioning gymnastics. Physical exercises. Physical activities. Health and quality of life. Basic notions of human physiology and exercise physiology. (7th grade)
Physical conditioning gymnastics. Body awareness gymnastics	Physical conditioning gymnastics. Body awareness gymnastics. Health and quality of life. Basic notions of human physiology and exercise physiology. (8th grade)
Physical conditioning gymnastics. Body awareness gymnastics	Physical conditioning gymnastics. Body awareness gymnastics. Health and quality of life. Basic notions of human physiology and exercise physiology. (9th grade)

Source: The authors, based on BNCC (Brasil, 2018) and CRMG (Minas Gerais, 2019).

A strong criticism of the BNCC is the absence of the “Games and Play” thematic unit in the 8th and 9th grades of middle school. Neira (2018, p. 220), on this, provokes: “Do 8th and 9th graders not play or have fun?” In the CRMG, this is the only moment that the acronym MG<sup>16</sup> is part of the skill description. That is, the only skill created by the CRMG for physical education is “EF89EF22MGP9” which brings the “Games and Play” thematic unit to the 9th grade.

EF89EF22MGP9 - Understand and analyze the importance of games and play throughout the lives of individuals, identifying ethical and aesthetic principles, values, and attitudes present in the times and spaces of experimentation, experience, and fruition, fostering their realization (Minas Gerais, 2019, p. 614).

<sup>15</sup> Notably, the details of the knowledge objects, a new feature of the CRMG, already presented earlier in the text, are not shown in the table.

<sup>16</sup> The CRMG adopts all BNCC skills. Modifications are indicated by ‘X’ (altered), ‘MG’ (newly created and registered with MEC), ‘A, B, C...’ (dismembered), and ‘P1, P2, P3...’ (progression in complexity). For Physical Education within the CRMG, only one skill was newly created, and some skills include progression.



As a way of constructing the CRMG from the adaptation of the BNCC, skills with progression appeared mainly when in the BNCC the skill was intended for Cycle I (1st and 2nd grades) and, as the CRMG presented the skills grade by grade, a progression was presented for each grade of the cycle, indicating degrees of complexity. Thus, the novelties of the CRMG in relation to physical education skills compared to the BNCC show some criticism when the “Games and Play” thematic unit is presented for the 9th grade, and appear to facilitate organization in terms of form when the option is to present them grade by grade. On the other hand, the idea of a cycle is abandoned.

## Final considerations

This study aimed to analyze the CRMG, specifically focusing on Physical Education, through the historical-dialectical materialist method. It also sought to identify its similarities with the BNCC and understand how this curricular component has been proposed for schools in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil.

Understanding the historical, political, and social context of the CRMG's development is crucial to comprehending the consolidation of educational policies rooted in the neoliberal curriculum trend, particularly the competency-based model. While the state considers this an innovation, it is not new with the CRMG's launch, as Minas Gerais had organized its curriculum this way since 2008. Thus, the CRMG represents a continuity, further affirming and reiterating the curriculum nationally imposed by the anti-democratic construction of the BNCC in 2017.

Notably, the CRMG, despite its alignment with the BNCC, resists prompting reflection on a new curriculum for its schools. Instead, it imposes the reproduction of the CBC, evident in both teaching content and the very structure of the document itself.

Furthermore, this analysis revealed the absence of a clear definition or conceptualization of physical education as a curricular component within the CRMG. This also applies to its stated objectives within the school context and even its object of study. Consequently, bodily culture is not explored with the necessary depth, while the document attributes a series of generic adjectives to the required bodily practices.

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#### **Acknowledgement:**

Research conducted through the PROPPG Call for proposals No. 10/2022 of the *Programa de Bolsas de Produtividade em Pesquisa* (Research Productivity Scholarship Program) (PQ) from the State University of Minas Gerais (UEMG).

The authors thank Espaço da Escrita – Pró-Reitoria de Pesquisa – UNICAMP – for the language services provided