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Investigating Physical Education Teachers Pedagogical Content Knowledge in Early Childhood Education

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Abstract

This qualitative study investigates Physical Education (PE) teaching within the framework of early childhood education - specifically focusing on preschool and the initial years of elementary school, collectively referred to here as Early Childhood Physical Education (ECPE). The research aims to analyze teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) to understand how their foundational knowledge (encompassing the student, content, context, and general pedagogy) organizes and informs their pedagogical practice. The investigation was conducted in two phases in a municipality in São Paulo, Brazil. In the first phase, fourteen PE teachers participated in an extension activity during their collective pedagogical work hours. The second phase involved semi-structured interviews with four teachers to explore how PCK functions in practice and to examine the vertical articulation of the ECPE curriculum. The teachers understand their students (the children) through direct interaction, adapting their lessons based on the children's immediate demands and expectations. While traditional games and popular culture activities constitute the core content, demonstrating sufficient didactic knowledge. The teachers' understanding of the broader school community and social environment remains superficial. Furthermore, general pedagogical knowledge appeared restricted to the classroom setting, with a notable lack of effective measures for curriculum continuity. The study concludes by suggesting the development of professional training programs tailored specifically to the unique profile of teachers working with early childhood.

Keywords: Physical Education; Pedagogical Content Knowledge (Pck); Preschool, Elementary School.