

Body, Yoga, and Continuing Teacher Education: experiences and awareness

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ABSTRACT – Body, Yoga, and Continuing Teacher Education: experiences and awareness. This study analyzes the potentiality of experiences with yoga in continuing teacher education for the reinterpretation of the corporeality of Kindergarten and Elementary School teachers. This was a qualitative research with 45 teachers of Physical Education, Pedagogy, Art and Special Education, from a city in the interior of São Paulo, with data generated through a focus group and questionnaire. Bodily experiences, as the guiding line of the training process, were shown to contribute to the blurring of the boundaries between what is experienced and what is taught, between the cognitive and the sensitive, enhancing for teachers the expansion of their understanding of themselves and the relationship with the other, in order to reverberate in personal and professional teaching profession.

Keywords: Continuing Teacher Education. Basic Education. Body. Yoga.

RESUMO – Corpo, Yoga e Formação Continuada de Professoras: experiências e sensibilizações. Analisa-se a potencialidade das experiências com o yoga na formação continuada para as ressignificações da corporalidade de professoras da Educação Infantil e dos anos iniciais do Ensino Fundamental. Participaram da pesquisa qualitativa 45 professoras de Educação Física, Pedagogia, Arte e Educação Especial, de uma cidade do interior paulista, com dados gerados por meio de grupo focal e questionário. Evidenciou-se que as experiências corporais, como o fio condutor do processo formativo, contribuem para a diluição das fronteiras entre o vivido e o ensinado, entre o cognitivo e o sensível, potencializando às professoras a expansão da compreensão de si e da relação com o outro, de modo a reverberar na formação pessoal e profissional docente.

Palavras-chave: Formação Continuada de Professores e Professoras. Educação Básica. Corpo. Yoga.

Introduction

How beautiful could a being be (Veloso, 1997).

The song's title that Moreno Veloso wrote as a gift to his father, Caetano, opens our reflections in this text. How beautiful could a being be? Being is a verb; the verb is action, movement; movement is the body; being, therefore, is the body. Because how beautiful could be (is) a being (male teacher/female teacher) who expresses themselves, moves, experiences, and builds the entire body. In this text¹, we propose to establish the interlocution between the body, the bodily experiences in teacher training, and being a teacher².

Body. An expression that gathers reflections – what is a body? –, interventions – can one improve the body? –, denials/deprivations – what can't/shouldn't the body? –, potentialities – what can the body do? Reflecting on the body is facing uncertainties, pluralities, ambiguities, mutations, and complexities. The body is wholeness and, at the same time, unfinishedness. It is political, social, and affective. The body is not given; the body is made: the woman body, child body, man body, transgender body, non-binary body... It is singular and multiple. Materialized, but not merely a natural species: it embodies cultural and historical possibilities, assuming meanings from its context. It is a materialization that never ceases to transform. Reflecting on the body is reflecting on bodies, in the plural. As Le Breton (2012, p. 26) contributes, “[...] the body seems to explain itself, but nothing is more misleading.”

Beyond anatomy and physiology, the body is a social and symbolic structure, a source of representations, and a social imaginary (Gomes, 2002; Le Breton, 2012). The body is the condition of our existence. First of all, human existence is corporeal. Therefore, all our actions are bodily, considering the interdependence of our thoughts, our emotions, and the senses of our body (Le Breton, 2012).

That said, it is necessary to overcome the duality of body-mind/reason/consciousness in society, as Silva (1999) reflects, which presents itself as highly rational and grounded in this dualism, in which mental activities predominate and disregards the crossings of our existence.

Education, as a social fact, suggests that teacher training cannot abdicate a condition of bodily existence that allows appropriating intellectual or cognitive knowledge without considering the bodily being that the teacher is because, as Le Breton (2019) recognizes, the body produces knowledge. The body, the reason for the social bond, is not a mere receptacle for language and a means of communication. Still, it is the production and expression of an entire symbolic system and an order of meanings. “The body is a ‘project inscribed in the world’: its movement is also knowledge and practical sense” (Le Breton, 2019, p. 51).

With these assumptions, reflecting on the body in the context of teacher training is understanding being a teacher, whether female or male, in its extension and entirety, agents of education and construction of a body, one's own and that of students, in a constant gesture of

transformation. As Le Breton (2019) supports, education shapes and models the body, movements, and facial expressions, making human actions the creation of meanings before others.

However, the emphasis on the bodily experiences of female and male teachers integrated into continuing education processes is still little observed. As Ehrenberg and Neira (2018, p. 124) point out, experiencing formative proposals bodily means “[...] putting bodies into action, producing knowledge,” and sensitive experiences mediate relationships with others (Le Breton, 2019), including the pedagogical relationships. According to that author, the human being is affectively present in the world (Le Breton, 2009). Therefore, considering the sensitive experience means recognizing that people are inserted in the world with and by emotions and are not just crossed by them. The relationships between people, between people and the world, with things, with time, with space, influence and are influenced by events, making experiences, however rational they may seem, to be involved and intertwined with affectivity. We understand sensitive experiences as social experiences that allow giving voice and offering to listen for affectivities to be protagonists during the training process.

We understand, on this basis, that training is configured as a multidimensional element that is not limited to academic-scientific issues but also affects the attitudinal and emotional dimensions (Rossi, 2013).

With these perspectives, our objective in this article is to analyze the potential of experiences with yoga in continuing education to re-signify the corporeality of teachers in Kindergarten and the initial years of Elementary School.

Thus, in the context of a continuing education program, placing our reflection on the body at the intersection with the theme of bodily experiences and the contours of corporeality, we sought, with a group of teachers, to value multiple bodies in their experiences with yoga as a power of re-signification of themselves and of the pedagogical work. We believed that the sensitive and critical expertise with yoga, conceiving the body-subject that builds its history and the whole body in the construction of teaching, would contribute to understanding the importance of the corporal experience for *being* a teacher and intertwined for child training.

Thus, by bringing bodily experiences, endowed with awareness, intelligence, and affectivity, understanding the body in its entirety, to the center of continuing education, especially in contemporary times in which the body is seen as an accessory to the presence or an obstacle to thought (Le Breton, 2013), we move forward in the perspective of conceiving the teacher, whether female or male, as a total being, in search of overcoming the dichotomy of body and reason in the teaching profession, focusing on the intensities of the body, as Silva (2014) highlights.

The theoretical framework of sociology and anthropology of the body by David Le Breton and female and male authors who focus on the study of being as a body in its entirety, in its corporeality and ex-

perience, such as Ana Márcia Silva, bell hooks, Jorge Larrosa, and others, bring us contributions to reinforce – without intending to exhaust such a rich and fruitful theme – the construction of the assumption that bodily experiences, feeling and reflecting on what this experimentation causes, in the context of continuing education, can overcome the construction of knowledge devoid of a body in teaching.

The Paths of Teacher Training and Reflection: methodological route

In this study, we base ourselves on the construction of a continuing education program³ called *Corporeity and Yoga at School*, which we developed in the Department of Education at the School of Sciences of the São Paulo State University (UNESP), Bauru campus, with teachers in practice in Kindergarten and in the early years of Elementary School, linked to the Municipal Education System of Bauru/SP.

Training consisted of situating corporeality and bodily experiences as foundations for the knowledge produced. Based on the philosophical-practical understanding of yoga, valuing multiple bodies in their movement experiences as a power to re-signify themselves and pedagogical work, we conduct studies and experiences relating to body and education.

The program's creators chose yoga as the manifestation to be mediated in continuing education due to its potential to expand the possibilities of bodily experience for teachers and children, considering its assumption of being in its entirety.

Three training groups were developed from 2015 to 2017. The first two lasted a year and a half, with the course period organized into three semesters/modules, totaling a workload of 120 hours. The third class was developed in one year, with two semesters and a workload of 80 hours. The periodicity of the meetings was weekly, lasting two and a half hours.

The activities in the meetings consisted of a moment dedicated to experiences with yoga postures, attention to breathing, and reflection on yoga's philosophical and practical foundations. In a second moment, in the conversation circles, studies related to the body, teaching, and childhood were discussed. Furthermore, during training, we included elaborating educational proposals with yoga in the school context and the socialization of the teachers' actions with the children in their classes. Finally, the meetings ended with the third moment dedicated to relaxation and guided meditation experiences. The female training agents and researchers interacted and participated in/created training proposals with the teachers.

The group of participants in this study totaled 45 teachers who completed all the modules of the training process and promptly accepted the invitation to participate in the research process. They are teachers aged between 29 and 60 years and working in primary edu-

cation from 3 to 33 years. Educators working in Kindergarten⁴, represent 80% of the participants (36 teachers). The other participants, nine teachers working in Elementary Schools (initial years), are five physical education teachers, three art teachers, and one special education teacher. The entire theoretical-methodological process of training and investigation was based on research-action⁵, in a movement of constant action and reflection, involving the group in a collective construction (Elliott, 1998; Imbernón, 2019). The qualitative approach contributed to reinforcing the principle of valuing the “[...] individual way of understanding reality” (André, 1995, p. 17), aiming at understanding the world from the perspective of the teachers (Bogdan; Biklen, 1999). The paradigm of qualitative research (Alves-Mazzotti, 1999) and research-action (Imbernón, 2019) have promoted significant changes in educational research, some of which have focused on valuing concepts and knowledge from the experience of teachers. In our course, we are concerned with each participating teacher’s conceptions, opinions, and values and the understanding of the group as a constituent part of the teaching profession.

In the training and analysis process, we assume the dialogical I-you relationship in search of a we that does not empty the I, nor transform it into an object of training, conceiving the teacher as a reproducer of knowledge and practices dictated by the university. Therefore, in this text, we use the first person plural because when we get involved with training, our experiences with the group of teachers and training agents to weave this writing, in addition to moving and situating us. They push us to other thoughts and other places. They place us in a personal and collective exercise of belonging, in a continuum of learning and feeling. As Silva (2014) explains, human actions must be understood as individual and collective expressions that are constituted and politically manifested.

For the manifestation of the teachers’ expressions and the generation of data for the research, we carried out focus group sessions and the application of a questionnaire. Discussions in the focus group made it possible to compose a framework of the teachers’ conceptions through critical group reflections and collective understanding of the topics addressed and allowed the teachers, at the same time, to share different views on the issues under analysis. For Gatti (2005, p. 9), the work with the focus group “[...] allows the emergence of a multiplicity of points of view and emotional processes, due to the interaction context created, allowing the capture of meanings that, with other means, could be difficult to manifest.” We intended to promote insights, as Morgan (1997) points out, to the extent that participants, when expressing their opinions and feelings, could become aware of beliefs and attitudes present in their behavior and those present in the conduct of others, sharing different views of the same phenomenon.

In this sense, the perspective for the group’s constitution, data collection, and analysis was sociological because, as belonging to a professional group, the intention was to value their perceptions with-

out disregarding the interaction between the teachers and the mutual identification as teachers. Through this approach, motivating the participants to reflect on their personal and professional training in the context they experienced, three focus group sessions were held, one at the end of each training class, with approximately 15 teachers each. The teachers participated only once in the focus and training groups. Each session lasted between one hour to one and a half hours, recorded in audio and transcribed in full.

The teachers were free to express any themes based on the triggering question of the training experience, and, from the aspects that emerged, we consider, in this article, especially the perceptions concerning bodily experiences, body conceptions, and perceptions of themselves and in the relationship with the other, constructed with bodily experiences and the reflection of corporeality.

Questionnaires to complement the information set emphasized the particularity of individual reflection and the expression of ideas and feelings by the participants, who could, considering the focus group dynamics due to the collective exhibition, feel more comfortable registering in this document. Applied at the end of each group's training, after the focus group session, the questionnaire generated data that contributed to the reflections in this article with the themes of the insertion of bodily experiences in the program and the perception of oneself and the other after the training experiences.

The complementary data generated were analyzed according to the assumptions of the analysis of qualitative data in education (Triviños, 1987) by elaborating categories *a posteriori*, in which the units of meaning in the generated data were identified, aiming to group the ideas and elements around of a concept to constitute the categories. Then, we proceeded with the descriptions and interpretations, considering, as Gomes (2001) advocated, that analyses and interpretations constitute the same movement of looking back at the research data.

As a result of this process, the data are analyzed in two categories: redefinitions of corporeality and recognition as corporeal beings; and recognition of oneself, oneself in the world, and the relationship with the other, in dialogue with the assumptions of the anthropological and sociological theory of the body, by David Le Breton (2009; 2012; 2013; 2019) and studies by Ana Márcia Silva (1999; 2014), bell hooks (2013), Jorge Larrosa Bondía (2002; 2011), among others, who propose delineations of the body in multiple dimensions. These fields of study are concerned with understanding “[...] the social and cultural logic that involves the extension and human movements” (Le Breton, 2012, p. 7), conceiving the body not as an object of culture but as a producer of senses. We hope, therefore, to promote an incursion into the interweaving between body, culture, and society by considering that the body and bodily experiences are configured as a condition and meaning of human existence; therefore, the condition and meaning of teacher training and performance.

The Body in Teacher Training: between experiences, recognitions, and reverberations

In this study, we deal with the body and corporeality of teachers as a collectivity; and the teacher's body and corporeality in its singularities. We do not intend to think about a merely universal body. Still, a situated body endowed with social and cultural meanings because: "At the foundation of any social practice, as a privileged mediator and pivot of human presence, the body is at the intersection of all instances of culture, the point of attribution *par excellence* of the symbolic field" (Le Breton, 2012, p. 31).

The expansion of self-understanding and its relationship with the other was enhanced by problematizing the body and bodily experiences as an existential attitude and a condition for building knowledge in teacher training in a sensitive perspective that expresses the whole body. In this sense, the constructed reflections permeated/unraveled the resignifications of corporeality and the recognition of oneself and oneself in the world.

Teachers in Training: redefinition of corporeality and recognition as a corporeal being

In the heritage of Western thought, strongly influenced by Cartesian philosophy, the human body is just a specific element of the general mechanics of the world, discernible from other mechanics only by the uniqueness of its gears, the subject being defined by the *cogito*. The consequence of this formulation of thought emptied of the body, with the detachment of intelligence from the being of the flesh, and with the body separated from the world that gives it meaning, was the historical extension of the implicit dissociation of the being from its body, stripping the latter of self-worth and generating the body understood as different from oneself (Le Breton, 2012). Thus, the body was promoted to an object of knowledge by its separation from what the non-body is, and this body-object became the subject's property and not the subject itself (Silva, 2014).

This understanding is expressed by the teachers, who recognize the body and mind dichotomy that permeates our existence in Western thought: "We experience a disconnection, mind, body, human being [...] all this demand, everything involves the intellectual, as if the brain and the body were disconnected" (Teacher Elza, GF⁶, 2016).

In refusing such psychophysical duality and approaching the thought of Baruch Spinoza, Le Breton (2013) wants to overcome the contemporary dualism, which opposes the being to the body, since the actions that weave the web of life, from everyday to the public, involve the mediation of corporeality. The author emphasizes that such dissociation has consequences in understanding the body as an obstacle in some currents of Western technoscience, which undertake an imagi-

nary dedicated to repairing or transfiguring this body – this poor machine. Contemporary scientific discourse instructs interventions in the body by verifying its precariousness – of the flesh, which gets sick, ages, and dies – and its imperfection in the sensory apprehension of the world. “This discourse of discredit censures the body for its lack of control over the world and its vulnerability,” making enthusiasts in this area anxiously wait for “the time of the end of the body” (Le Breton, 2013, p. 16), a post-organic or post-biological body, for example, to be able to remodel, control, “immaterialize” the subject (Le Breton, 2013, p. 17), which would tend to redefine the conditions of existence and reduce the body to a machine of the highest perfection, making it less and less necessary for the development and reproduction of life.

As the body increasingly becomes a body-machine, a body without subject and affection is produced. The body-bricolage of the extreme contemporary oscillates between the will to power and narcissism (Le Breton, 2013). There is not, in modern times, only contempt for the body; an ambivalence prevails, enjoyment on the one hand and contempt for the body on the other, emphasizes the author.

Body-mind fragmentation crosses the educational system, from teacher training to teaching in schools. As for the former, little attention is paid to being a teacher: “Many courses focus on the student. But what are we doing for these teachers? We have to work on the human being because everything is increasingly fragmented” (Teacher Cecília, GF, 2016), reports teacher Cecília when referring to her continuing education experiences.

Teacher Elza (Q, 2016) reinforces this perception by stating that, in 20 years of teaching, she has never participated in a proposal for continuing education that conceives the teacher as an “integral being.” Teacher Mel (GF, 2016) also brings up the dichotomy between theory and practice present in training: “The courses are a lot of theory, and we don’t see practice in everyday life. Neither is this being in the world that perceives.”

In previous research, Kindergarten teachers, participants in the continuing education proposed by Reis and Ostetto (2018), presented evidence for the authors to situate, as a significant element of educational change and articulation between theory and practice, the attitude – of being open, to learn, to focus on seeing/thinking about actions. Furthermore, the shared experience among peers, as an integral and significant part of continuing education, allowed teachers to situate theories in reality. We add, as Ehrenberg and Ayoub (2020) found in the development of a continuing education program, that the movement to break the logic of separation between theory and practice finds resonance in a non-dichotomizing understanding between gesture and thought.

As Gomes (2002) reminds us, the body is the junction and overlapping of beliefs and feelings that constitute the foundation of social life and its nature and materiality: “We are facing a double and dialectical

reality: at the same time that it is natural, the body is also symbolic” (Gomes, 2002, p. 41). For Soares and Terra (2007, p. 102, emphasis added), “[...] sometimes referred to nature, sometimes to culture, the body is the very sensitive place of this delicate interconnection. Or perhaps it is even the truest testimony that its *nature* has been *cultural* in the long run.” Rodrigues (2005) confirms that the body, if socially constructed, is relative and historical. The biological and the cultural are concepts, and the human body is not an object that has two sides, one fixed and biological and the other variable and cultural, but only one: it is the body.

However, “[...] the attempt to unify/conceive the subject as integral and not fragmented being, sometimes as a mind, sometimes physical, is indeed a challenge,” reflects teacher Mari (GF, 2016). Public policies for teacher training, Basic Education, and school organization tend to situate contents in a disciplinary manner, in a quantifiable and cumulative transmission logic, so that experiences of oneself (bodily), the sensibilities, and perceptions, which foster our sensitive and aesthetic capacities, including in the relationship with the other, do not find space to resonate in us as teachers and as people.

Such logics insert, delegate and lead the Basic Education teacher to acquiesce in the fulfillment of teaching plans immersed in disembodied relationships and relegate to the body the place of an abject body, for all – teacher and student – subsumed in a watertight structure and purely rational, dense in the separation between thought and incarnated subject.

Le Breton (2013) reinforces that the conception of the body as an indifferent matter or simple support of the person, in contemporary times, places it in a place ontologically distinct from the being, a raw material without a root of identity and in which this identity is diluted. This fragmented body-machine has its movements restricted to material productivity, standardized, and moves away from the subjective perspective of being, weakening its dialectical relationship with the world, its expressive singularity, and its corporeality in its humanity.

The course of bodily experiences and reflections in continuing education guided the teachers toward the construction of an understanding of the body beyond such fragmentations when they could perceive themselves as whole bodily beings: “[...] this issue also of perception, of perceiving yourself, that you have a body. You don’t just have a head, you are a body” (Teacher Lila, GF, 2017); “[...] and this issue of values, you can no longer do things disconnected, not thinking about human beings as a whole. The perception of this was a gain, of things being connected and advancing in other thoughts, returning to this human being as a whole” (Teacher Paula, GF, 2017). The teachers’ reflections converge with Le Breton’s (2019) notes, highlighting that the body is not a mere part of the subject or a passive matter, whether at the service of the will or an obstacle to communication; it is instead an intelligence of the world, a living theory in the social environment.

Our understanding of the body and bodily experience is assumed to have the guiding thread of corporeality not as a static concept or definition but as a way of understanding that the body – that moves and expresses itself – is a body in its entirety, which produces itself, and manifests itself in the intersection between the domain of nature and culture (Oliveira, 2005). Corporeality is “[...] corporeal materiality in its dynamic form of human expression” that brings together the uniqueness of being at the same time that all share it and, therefore, “[...] is a concept that is loaded with intentionality as all human action is, in its political dimension” (Silva, 2014, p. 16).

Being a body is a movement; it is a gesture; it is an expression, and it is thought, as reflected in the teachers’ reports: “[...] we are not just intellect, we are the whole body, we are action, movement, and everything is interconnected, and having body awareness is of fundamental importance” (Teacher Lenu, Q, 2017); “[...] whoever starts to see other philosophies, other aspects, already knows that this is not the case, that everything has to be connected” (Teacher Conceição, GF, 2016).

Silva (2014) complements that, epistemologically and professionally, corporeality, by bringing together bodily manifestations, perceptions of the body, movement, and environment, offers fruitful possibilities of respect for human wholeness and meaningful experiences when present/mediated by pedagogical action.

Therefore, it is necessary to understand that we are the body and respect the body itself; after all, we are not machines, and we have limits, reiterated the teachers Francisca (Q, 2017): “I learned to be much more attentive to my posture, to be careful, and respectful with my body” and Giovana (GF, 2017):

I was noticing my body, you know? My self, I am the body; I am cautious, you know? Less, respect your body and your limits. It was very important for me to learn to respect my limits. I’m not a machine; I have to work, respect, and breathe; we forget about that, right? To respect yourself, to set a limit too.

This is how a teacher expressed it: “This issue of self-knowledge, body perception was fantastic, a wonderful discovery, and we know that this is a process” (Teacher Paula, GF, 2017). As recognized by Ehrenberg and Ayoub (2020, p. 11), the results of the continuing education that the authors developed allow us to reflect that “[...] the change is not determined, but constructed, experienced, and conquered.” It is precisely the awareness of oneself as an unfinished being that inscribes us in a permanent movement of search, situating our presence in the world (Freire, 2002), given that “[...] the body speaks about our being in the world,” and that our social place is established by its mediation in space and time (Gomes, 2002, p. 41).

Given the reports, we have that the look of the teachers for themselves in their entirety permeated the perception of their own body, going beyond the sphere of biological or fragmentation, understanding themselves as the physical being that they are and not a body-support

or a productive machine. Still, a body that respects itself, has its limits and knows itself.

The bodily experience and the encounter with oneself can generate suffering, crying, and anguish. For teacher Denise, looking at herself made her remember painful experiences, perhaps already covered up. hooks (2013, p. 124) understands that mobilizing the knowledge can lead to a process of suffering because this is “[...] a way of knowing that is often expressed through the body, what it knows, what was deeply inscribed in it.” For Larrosa Bondía (2002), we are, as subjects of experience, sensitive to what happens to us, and that, in some way, produces affections, inscribes marks, and results in effects in what we feel, in what we know, and in what we want.

The place of experience, therefore, is complex, but it is a privileged position, elucidates hooks (2013, p. 124), even if it is not the only one through which knowledge is possibly produced. Therefore, we must engage in multiple ways of gathering knowledge entirely and inclusively. It is like a cooking recipe, reflecting the author: “[...] imagine that we are making bread. We have all the ingredients except the flour. Suddenly, flour becomes the most important thing, even though it alone cannot make bread. It is a way of thinking about experience in the classroom” (hooks, 2013, p. 124) – and in teacher training, we complement.

It is possible to weave a constitutive relationship between the ideas of experience and training from the perspective of Larrosa Bondía (2011), allowing us to think of other possibilities since experience forms and transforms us. Therefore, in the formative process, we were able to follow paths for/with the teacher who “[...] experiences her own transformation [...] the transformation of her words, her ideas, her feelings, her representations” (Larrosa Bondía, 2011, p. 7) and her corporeality.

To finalize the reflections of this axis and encourage the following ones, which are focused on recognizing oneself, of oneself in the world, and of one’s relationship with the other, we bring the report of teacher Miriam, who points out that “[...] the world today, this speed, everything that is required of the human being... so they manage to put aside the body, not having that importance, only the ideas matter” (Teacher Miriam, GF, 2017). This is how we refer to the speed and fluidity of contemporaneity, in allusion to the liquidity observed by Bauman (2009), which leads us to rationalize and optimize all our actions. Larrosa Bondía (2002) emphasizes the dynamics of contemporary life – an excess of information and work and a lack of time – as a weakening element for building experiences, as many things pass us by daily, but few mark us as an experience.

Furthermore, what experiences are we building in education and teacher training? What time are we dedicating to ourselves, teachers, as bodily, complete, and affective beings? What opportunities for experiences are offered to us, and we allow ourselves to perceive ourselves, to build our experiences and sensibilities? To reflect on these issues, we present bodily experiences in continuing education as ways of raising awareness in teaching.

Bodily Experiences as Awareness for the Recognition of oneself, of oneself in the World, and of the Relationship with the Other

With the experiential and reflective process in the program, we seek the textures between teacher training and corporeality. In this process, which comprises manifestations aimed at sensitive experiences and the critical reflection of the being and its expression in the world, we work specifically with yoga.

Corporeality and its manifestations, such as games, dances, gymnastics, sports, circus activities, and body awareness activities, among others, integrate these sensitive experiences, constituting forms of expression, language endowed with senses and meanings (Ehrenberg, 2014; Silva, 2014; Ehrenberg; Ayoub, 2020). Understood as elements of culture with deep roots and expressed in and through the body, they are configured as social practices, as they are intrinsically linked to reality.

Yoga, ancient philosophical-practical knowledge, makes it possible to enhance the perception of oneself as a physical being, self-knowledge, aesthetic, and ethical bodily experimentation. This bodily manifestation involves the whole human being based on the union. Therefore, actions and reflections are proposed in an integrated way with postures (*ásanas*), challenging to maintain balance, resistance, and stretching, whose focus is on body awareness; the philosophical principles (*yamas* and *nyamas*), which emphasize behaviors and attitudes based on truth, non-violence, detachment, perseverance, self-study, among others; and breathing (*pranayamas*), concentration, and meditation (*pratyahara*, *dharana*, and *dhyana*)⁷, practices, which silence thoughts and relax, enhancing self-observation. Such aspects lead us to reflect on our place in the world, expand self-knowledge by understanding our emotions and actions, and build values and attitudes that focus on a more conscious and respectful perception of ourselves and the appreciation of others and our surroundings.

For this construction, the meetings were organized around an experience with the *ásanas* to awaken the potential of the body and its perceptions. The *yamas* and *nyamas* were reflected both during the experience of the *ásanas* and in moments destined for group dialogue. *Pranayamas* allowed, in these processes, the expansion of vital energy with awareness of breathing and, consequently, awareness of each gesture and its effects on the body, with a more harmonious construction of thoughts. During conversations, we debated textual and audiovisual productions related to the body's historical, social, cultural, and philosophical aspects, being a teacher, education, being a child, and the specificities of childhood. Therefore, we mobilized a personal formation articulated to the professional one, aiming to insert this physical manifestation in the school in a way that would provide the children with the experience of yoga and, with it, the infantile corporeality and the perception of themselves could be potentiated, bringing in its bulge the relationship with the other and with the world.

We ended the meetings with relaxation experiences and guided meditation. Yoga values the pauses as forms of introjection of experience and states of consciousness. Finally, another action present in our meetings was elaborating educational proposals with yoga for children and the socialization of the teachers' activities with their classes in schools, in a constant sharing of feelings and actions in teaching.

The experiences with yoga assumed an integrated perspective with the attribution of meaning, as proposed by Larrosa Bondía (2002; 2011). Based on Walter Benjamin, the author emphasizes the potential of experience for the educational field, considering it marks us, touches us, generates meaning, and transforms our lives. It is precisely how bodily experiences modify, touch, and generate meanings for life and the teaching profession that constitutes our concern.

The expansion of self-recognition was remarkable in the teachers' manifestations and initially went through the observation and perception of the bodily being they are: "Now, I observe my body more" (Teacher Bianca, Q, 2016); "[...] I can't see myself without this special moment for me, where the focus is ME" (Teacher Raquel, Q, 2016); "I started to have a new look at my own body" (Teacher Laura, Q, 2017); "Today I have a different view of the self" (Teacher Elis, Q, 2016).

At the beginning of the process, the teachers reported that they felt selfish for seeking training aimed primarily at their benefit, at their bodily experience, as Teacher Anita said: "[...] and when, at the first meeting, you asked why I was doing, I said: 'I am, in a kind of selfish way, I came for myself'" (Teacher Anita, GF, 2017). Another teacher indicated: "[...] I need to take care of myself" (Teacher Mel, GF, 2016).

The teachers' interest in yoga supports the findings of Antunes, Lagranha, Sousa, Silva, and Fraga (2018, p. 244), who concluded, in a systematic literature review study, that integrative and complementary body practices contribute, among others, to the self-care process, as they are concerned "[...] with people understanding the body in its entirety, feeling better in everyday life," valuing the material and immaterial dimensions of the body.

However, this movement of turning attention to oneself, far from being a selfish act, is related to self-knowledge, awakening the individual to self-care, empowerment, and autonomy as a means of personal development (Mizuno et al., 2018). Still, emphasizing self-care nowadays carries with it a political meaning, with the possibility of generating resistance, changes, displacements, and being other than what one is, constituting new social bonds, which would lead us to think and live differently (Rago, 2007).

This is what the group indicated, as the new perspectives on the body, on the "I"/for oneself, echoed in perspectives on life: "[...] it was the moment to focus on myself; a moment of inner awareness, of awareness of my being, which led to my personal and professional growth, with a new look at life" (Teacher Cecília, Q, 2016); "[...] it was one of the best, if not the best course I've ever taken because I not only grew pro-

professionally, but I reflected and learned to look at myself, to respect myself, to calm down. I see life with new eyes” (Teacher Judite, Q, 2016). Corporeality contributed to teacher Elis (GF, 2016): “[...] my personal growth mainly [...] me as a person. Yoga not only came to help with my physique, stretching, finding the points that hurt the most and such, but it led me to see life in another, more integrated way.”

The constructions articulated between the personal and the professional, understanding the implications of self-formation for the pedagogical performance, transcended the initial feeling centered on individuality indicated by the teachers. A fact that was understandable at that time because, as Ehrenberg and Ayoub (2020) also identified, it is challenging for educators to turn their eyes to themselves, in the context of continuing education, without the immediate intention of transposing the knowledge developed in pedagogical actions with the children in schools.

The potency of the bodily experience in raising the teachers’ awareness also revealed the perception and overcoming of limits: “[...] I saw that I didn’t understand my body, that I didn’t know I could make some movements” (Teacher Raquel, Q, 2016); “I was surprised by the overcoming of my limits. I had the impression of leaving the class ‘untangled’ in every way. It brought me self-knowledge, learning (Teacher Nina, Q, 2016)”. This also led to a feeling of empowerment regarding the possibilities of corporeality: “The perception of my body and its possibilities made me rethink, know, perceive” (Teacher Rosa, Q, 2016); and teacher Ágata (GF, 2016) emphasized: “[...] I feel that I can and should take a stand for education, with the leaders, with everyone.”

If the body is inscribed in power relations (Le Breton, 2012), it is necessary to break with the idea of institutional teaching as the place where the body has to be erased or go unnoticed, as reported by hooks (2013) because the body – female teacher/male teacher and female student/male student – is knowledge, it is political, it is resistance. Therefore, it becomes fundamental that the body, understood as social, plural, and, at the same time, singular, is recognized not as a part of the person, but as the person in themselves, like the female teacher, the male teacher, the children themselves. To be a subject is to be a body.

As an effect of social and cultural elaboration, the body is constructed by its actions in the collective scene and, in association, by the theories that explain its functioning (Le Breton, 2012), resulting from social and cultural contradictions. Because it is crossed by subjectivity, it is in a conflicting social terrain. The body is explored in relations of power and domination with the classification and hierarchization of different ethnic groups: “[...] throughout history, the body has become an ethnic emblem, and its manipulation has become a striking cultural characteristic for different peoples” (Gomes, 2003, p. 174). Therefore, the body is generated by the interaction of discursive social markers of gender, race, class, and culture, among others, which cannot be disregarded in educational processes.

As Larrosa Bondía (2002, p. 27) contributes, “[...] experience and the knowledge derived from it are what allow us to take ownership of our own lives.” The author also emphasizes that experience helps us form or transform our sensibilities and feelings (Larrosa Bondía, 2011). For teachers, it takes time, space, and conditions to perceive oneself, to look at oneself, and to experience oneself:

We must be well and balanced to see and be sensitive to problems. In other words, to self-perceive, to feel how your body is. I saw how much I need to stop to observe myself, stop to stop thinking [...]. Taking a moment out of the week and looking at myself as a human being, realizing my body's needs (Teacher Raquel, Q, 2016).

“The teacher doesn't really have time to understand, to make the movement. The teacher needs this moment” (Teacher Cecília, GF, 2016). This moment in continuing education showed as necessary for teachers. One of them even associated perceiving oneself with living in the present: “Currently, I have been feeling the desire and need to stop for a few moments or hours to understand myself better. Living in the present was another learning of yoga. It's still far from me, but I know I need to exercise daily” (Teacher Denise, Q, 2017).

Pauses, for teacher Paula (GF, 2017), act as drivers of self-recognition that leads to action: “[...] you have these moments of stopping to think about this body, what it can do. And to see that this is part of everything we need to recognize ourselves and to act.” Sensitive knowledge, for Le Breton (2019, p. 52), “[...] inscribes the body in the continuity of the individual's intentions confronted with the surrounding world.” Thus, perception, intention, and action intertwine in relationships with others.

The experiences in training ended with moments of relaxation, meditation, and interiorization of the senses, valuing self-knowledge, as presupposed by the philosophy of yoga. Therefore, time was provided to savor the stillness, to silence. This process quieted the teachers' thoughts, generating tranquility, serenity, and a return to self-awareness. It involved re-signifying their conceptions and attention to their actions toward the other. Mizuno et al. (2018) support that the encounter with silence can result in self-observation, triggering a review of values and actions.

Oliveira (2009) contributes by saying that the dimension of the body and affection, as a form of communication in continuing education, enables self-knowledge and the perception of the other, in addition to recognizing the relational interweavings in the field of education, woven between teachers, children, managers, and community, among others involved. Therefore, the affective experiences, in dialogue with the theoretical reflections, influenced the self-knowledge of teachers as people and professionals.

“Bodily conquests bring emotional conquests,” highlighted teacher Pilar (Q, 2017), pointing out the relationship between bodily experiences and emotions, reinforcing that awakening to the body af-

fects postures and attitudes. In the sociocultural context, according to Le Breton (2012, p. 94), to reflect on the body is to understand this web of meanings that surrounds it, contemplating the “[...] social and cultural logics that cross [it] [...], i.e., the part of the symbolic dimension, for example, in sensorial perceptions, in the expressions of emoticons, among others”, understanding ourselves in the extension of our relationship with the world, considering that it is through corporeality that we make this world the extension of our experience.

In defense of the fact that our body is not an object, Le Breton (2019, p. 138) allows us to reflect on the dimension of emotions by assuming that human beings are permeated by feelings in their actions, in their relationships with others, with objects, and their environment. It is intricate and permanently influenced by the events that affect it. Therefore, we are affectively in the world because “[...] there is an intelligibility of emotion, a logic that imposes itself on it; likewise, an affectivity in the most rigorous of thoughts, an emotion that conditions it.” Thinking and feeling are not irreconcilable opposites, as the Cartesian perspective advocates.

Continuing education based solely on content or techniques does not include full teacher training that results in the completeness of the act of teaching and the training of students. Training needs to guarantee time, space, and welcoming situations so that teachers can experience, talk and reflect on themselves, what they feel, what they aspire to as human beings, and what affects them to build their affections.

Bodily experiences are crossed by ethical and aesthetic values, expressing ways of being, feeling, and acting in an entrainment of feelings, thoughts, and actions: “[...] my body awareness has been improved, and I use a lot of self-awareness and breathing to make more assertive decisions” (Teacher Anita, Q, 2017). The teachers felt more understanding with themselves and in their relationships with others: “I have more self-control of my feelings, I am more calm and objective in dealing with others” (Teacher Rosana, Q, 2016); “Tranquility and stillness became part of my life. Serenity to deal with everyday problems” (Teacher Francisca, Q, 2017); “I’m definitely different from when I started training. I am more confident, decisive, and attentive. My anxiety has decreased, and I can better control my feelings in times of tension” (Teacher Pilar, Q, 2017).

Bodily experiences, sensitive and simultaneously intelligible, are essential for understanding human beings who appropriate and express themselves in the world through corporeality. Contrary to opposing reason to emotion, by denying that both are imbued with values, therefore, with affectivity, it is worth understanding that even the decisions that we assume to be more rational involve affectivity (Le Breton, 2019).

“Heart” and “reason” for Le Breton (2019), instead of distancing themselves, intertwine and influence each other in our conduct. From muscular and visceral perceptions to changes in how we look at the world or our relationship with others, we have resonances of being a

body, of existing as a continuous thread of living, diffuse feelings, susceptible to changes according to circumstances. “The enjoyment of the world is an emotion that each situation renews according to its colors. Even the activity of thinking does not escape this filter” (Le Breton, 2019, p. 138).

The dimension of affection is fundamental to understanding ourselves as human beings. We are not only rational beings, but we are also affective beings. The overvaluation of rationality in contemporary times, with measurement, checking, and validation to the detriment of the subjects’ perceptions, led us to put affection and emotion in the background.

The teacher is not a teaching machine but rather a person. The idea of affection is related to the act of affecting, to what moves us, and to the commitment to what we can generate in the other. We can recognize what affects us, value our affections, and how we affect the people we live with when we turn to our corporeality, as the teachers revealed: “This reflects on my students, my friends, and my family” (Teacher Mércia, Q, 2016); “The biggest change I noticed was concerning my behavior, about the children, personal problems, and even the way I see the world” (Teacher Aline, GF, 2017).

The reports elucidate the relationship between knowledge/control of feelings and how to deal with others. This allows us to think that affection and communication cross the social bonds we can exercise in our postures and interactions. Every human action is imbued with emotion, and building emotions is a bodily process impregnated with individual and collective experiences. Since the body is the core of the relationship between the being and the world, the “[...] process of socialization of the bodily experience is a constant of the social condition” of the human being (Le Breton, 2012, p. 8). Personal and social intertwine in our actions, and not just the word. Still, the body primarily promotes the presence of oneself and the other and builds their narratives, emphasizes Le Breton (2019).

Still, for the author, there is an “affective culture” (Le Breton, 2019) that socially modulates the expression of emotion and, as a result, the emotion expressed may not coincide with what the body feels but rather be in agreement with the social and cultural orientations of a particular group in which it operates. However, the social dimension is not absolute, and the individuals are active in producing the meaning of their emotions according to their personal history – professional position, age, and gender, among others. Thus, the body of emotions builds narratives that are never watertight, therefore, always provisional, with their nuances in articulating the physiological with the symbolic. Consequently, we infer that expanding self-awareness is fundamental to understanding ourselves and our actions and reactions in our social groups.

As we develop our ability to be affected and affect, perceiving our affections, we can relate them to our rationales, identify how they are

intertwined, and undertake respect for what we feel and want to transform. Thus, we need to perceive and feel life rather than just explain it rationally, by logic, or by reason.

The manifestations of body culture in continuing education, linked to the sensitive dimension, are seen as belonging to non-rationalities. It is unnecessary to fit them into a mechanistic view of the world that considers human movement purely from its biomechanical perspective. We are interested in gestures full of meaning, the symbolic efficacy that the body can promote. If, as Le Breton (2019) brings, even in the most rational decision, emotion is ingrained, it is evident that we are the ones who divide to place each dimension or human expression in a closed way. Therefore, experiencing does not have to be productive; its power and density lie in perceiving oneself, looking at oneself, and reconstructing oneself.

We seek in continuing education a correspondence between feeling and thinking precisely because reason is not sovereign in guiding our conduct or the only one that defines us. Feeling, playfulness, emotions, and the senses of our body cross our modes of understanding and action. It is about expanding and deepening teacher training with the idea that it seeks to break the body and intellect fragmentation or even the watertight separation between professional and personal development in teaching.

An individual feels, desires, and has emotions between knowledge and action. Objectivity and subjectivity are imbricated in every gesture and act of teaching. “Human beings... cannot be detached from the world in which they are inserted” – rightly emphasized teacher Angélica (GF, 2017) – and we can add that *being* a teacher cannot either, because being in the world means being with the world, being with people, as well makes us reflect Paulo Freire (2002).

Corporeality and bodily experiences, therefore, lead us to self-knowledge and recognition of our place in life, in society, in the lives of students, at school, and in the political-educational system because, when we look at ourselves, we can also see, understand, and recognize the other and the world.

Final Considerations

How inspired by the music that inaugurated our reflections in this text, how beautiful is a being that is a whole body that goes on in life in a constant movement of transforming itself. Throughout these reflections, we could think of the body as a place of being, a place of existence, and a place of permanent construction. Being the body and the corporal experience expression and creation of living, corporeality, as a human condition, is an inescapable experience of education and teacher training.

In this research, the bodily experiences and the reflection on corporeality in the continuing education of teachers potentiated the

expansion of the understanding of oneself as a person and a teacher, of oneself in the world, and of one's relationship with the other. The teachers built the knowledge of the body as a social and cultural elaboration, which brings together the symbolic dimension and is constructed, among other things, through sensory perceptions, gestures, and expressions of emotions. The (re)discoveries of oneself permeated the perception of one's body, overcoming fragmentation by understanding oneself as a body and not as the holder of a body-obstacle or a body-support, but a body that communicates and expresses itself, relates and builds knowledge.

The gestures color our presence in the world, manifest, and give life to our emotions. Furthermore, with bodily experiences, this body communicates its emotions with the other in a symbolic universe – a constituent of our human specificity – generated in the intersection of the singular with the collective, of the perceptions of the body with the cultural and social orientation. Corporeality, emphasized by the philosophical-practical principles of yoga in this process, integrates sensitive, aesthetic, and self-reflection experiences and their expression in the world and relationships with others.

Bringing corporeality and yoga to teachers in continuing education resonated with their perception of themselves as a physical being, turning their attention to their whole body, moving in other directions, in different looks at life, recognizing their limits and, at the same time, their potential, feeling able to go further in their physical, emotional, and social achievements. By providing times and spaces for perceiving and experiencing oneself, training could boost the texture of the fabric of feelings, thoughts, and actions intertwined in the possibilities of recognizing affections, their affections, and how they are capable of affecting. The socialization of the bodily experience is a constant part of the human being's social condition. The teachers showed that their experiences, beyond their uniqueness, echoed in attitudes and postures that are more understanding with themselves and in relationships with others.

Considering that it is the experiences that constitute the being and its actions (Le Breton, 2012; 2019), the dismemberment of this proposal will come with the reflections directed towards the interlocution between the bodily experiences in the continuing teacher education and how knowledge is constructed/ incorporated affect/reverberate in the pedagogical actions in schools, with children in Kindergarten and the early years of Elementary School.

Finally, we understand that knowledge emerges from lived experience and, by bringing bodily experiences as the guiding thread of the formative process in a social and educational context that is intensely rational and based on the body-mind dualism, it contributes to the dilution of borders between what is lived and what is taught, between what is cognitive and what is sensitive, since the world is perceived bodily. Our history crosses our conceptions and actions, constantly elaborated and re-elaborated in our whole body.

Notes

- 1 This article is the result of post-doctoral research carried out at the School of Education of the University of São Paulo/FEUSP under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Mônica Caldas Ehrenberg.
- 2 All study participants are women. Therefore, the terms teacher and educator in this text indicate female ones, except if indicated otherwise.
- 3 The program was supported by the Dean of University Extension (PROEX/UNESP).
- 4 At this stage of primary education, there are no specialist teachers in Physical Education or Art in the Municipal Education System of Bauru-SP. It is the prerogative of female and male Educators to work with the knowledge of all areas of the curricular matrix.
- 5 The Ethics Committee of the School of Sciences of UNESP Bauru, Opinion No. 3,816,652, approved the research. The names attributed in the discussions are fictitious, chosen by the researchers.
- 6 To identify the sources of the reports, we attributed the abbreviations GF to the data extracted from the Focus Group sessions and Q to indicate information obtained using the Questionnaires.
- 7 The yoga steps indicated here are based on the elaboration of Mizuno et al. (2018) based on Patañjali's Yoga-Sutra, considered a fundamental text of this philosophy and interpreted by Feuerstein (1998). Samadhi, the eighth and final step, is the pinnacle of yoga, the indescribable state of superconsciousness, a long and constant quest for its practitioners.

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