



"I AM NO LONGER THE PERSON I USED TO": INTEGRAL HUMAN FORMATION AND BODILY EMPOWERMENT IN THE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AT IFRN

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The theme of this study was the relationship between the integral human formation postulated by Professional and Technological Education in Brazil and the body image of students at the Federal Institute of Rio Grande do Norte (IFRN in Portuguese), aiming to understand how pedagogical practices in Physical Education at the institution affected the body image of the participants. This study is originated from a master's research developed at the Graduate Program in Professional Education (PPGEP in Portuguese) of the IFRN between 2019 and 2021. It consists of an explanatory research of a qualitative nature, characterized as a field study, developed with six female students from IFRN - *Campus* Canguaretama, through the adoption of the Diary requested via WhatsApp. The analysis of the diaries, based on Discursive Textual Analysis (DTA), points to the role of the psychologist and the Physical Education teachers in dealing with the young women's issues and their body image conflicts, and warns for the need for integration between the practices developed in the classroom and those that take place in other institutional spaces-times. In addition, the reports indicate that the students acquired autonomy, critical thinking abilities, self-realization and empowerment through the conflicts they experienced inside and outside the school during the teaching and learning process offered by the IFRN, while also highlighting the relevant role of Physical Education in this process. Finally, the results show the need to develop pedagogical practices related to the body in an integrated and interdisciplinary way, with a view to promoting the omnilateral education of students.

Keywords: Body image. Pedagogical practices. Integral human formation.

“EU NÃO SOU MAIS A PESSOA QUE EU ERA”: FORMAÇÃO HUMANA INTEGRAL E EMPODERAMENTO CORPORAL NAS PRÁTICAS PEDAGÓGICAS DA EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA NO IFRN

RESUMO

O presente estudo teve como tema as relações entre a formação humana integral postulada pela Educação Profissional e Tecnológica no Brasil e a imagem corporal de estudantes do Instituto Federal do Rio Grande do Norte (IFRN), com o objetivo de compreender como as práticas pedagógicas em Educação Física na instituição afetaram a imagem corporal das participantes, e é oriundo de uma pesquisa de mestrado desenvolvida no Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação Profissional (PPGEP) do IFRN entre 2019 e 2021. Consiste em uma pesquisa explicativa de natureza qualitativa, caracterizada como estudo de campo, desenvolvida com seis estudantes do gênero feminino do IFRN –



Campus Canguaretama, por meio da adoção do Diário solicitado via WhatsApp. A análise dos diários, feita com base na Análise Textual Discursiva (ATD), aponta o protagonismo da psicóloga e dos professores de Educação Física na mediação entre as jovens e seus conflitos quanto à imagem corporal, e alerta para a necessidade de integração entre as práticas desenvolvidas na sala de aula e aquelas que acontecem em outros espaços-tempos institucionais. Além disso, os relatos sinalizam que as estudantes adquiriram autonomia, capacidade crítica, autorrealização e empoderamento mediante os conflitos vivenciados interna e externamente à escola durante o processo de ensino e aprendizagem oferecido pelo IFRN, e destacam o papel relevante da Educação Física nesse processo. Por fim, os resultados reforçam a necessidade do desenvolvimento de práticas pedagógicas relacionadas ao corpo de forma integradora e interdisciplinar, visando promover a formação omnilateral dos estudantes.

Palavras-chave: Imagem corporal. Práticas pedagógicas. Formação humana integral.

"YA NO SOY LA PERSONA QUE ERA": FORMACIÓN HUMANA INTEGRAL Y EMPODERAMIENTO CORPORAL EN LAS PRÁCTICAS PEDAGÓGICAS DE EDUCACIÓN FÍSICA EN EL IFRN

RESUMEN

El tema de este estudio fue la relación entre la formación humana integral postulada por la Educación Profesional y Tecnológica en Brasil y la imagen corporal de las estudiantes del Instituto Federal de Rio Grande do Norte (IFRN), con el objetivo de comprender cómo las prácticas pedagógicas en Educación Física en la institución afectaron la imagen corporal de las participantes, y proviene de una investigación de maestría desarrollada en el Programa de Posgrado en Educación Profesional (PPGEP) del IFRN entre 2019 y 2021. Consiste en una investigación cualitativa explicativa, caracterizada como estudio de campo, desarrollada con seis alumnas del IFRN - *Campus* Canguaretama, a través de la adopción del Diario solicitado vía WhatsApp. Los diarios fueron analizados por medio del Análisis Textual Discursivo (ATD), señalando el papel desempeñado por la psicóloga y los profesores de Educación Física en la mediación entre las chicas y sus conflictos de imagen corporal, y alertando sobre la necesidad de integración entre las prácticas desarrolladas en el aula y las que tienen lugar en otros espacios-tiempos institucionales. Además, los relatos indican que las alumnas adquirieron autonomía, capacidad crítica, autorrealización y empoderamiento a través de los conflictos vividos dentro y fuera de la escuela durante el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje ofrecido por la IFRN, y destacan el papel relevante de la Educación Física en este proceso. Por último, los resultados refuerzan la necesidad de desarrollar prácticas relacionadas con el cuerpo de forma integrada e interdisciplinar, con vistas a promover la formación omnilateral de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: Imagen corporal. Práticas pedagógicas. Formación humana integral.



INTRODUCTION

This paper comes from a master's degree research project¹ developed in the Graduate Program in Professional Education at the Federal Institute of Rio Grande do Norte (PPGEP/IFRN in Portuguese) between 2019 and 2021². The subject of the research was the relationship between comprehensive human development, as advocated by the legal provisions of Professional and Technological Education (EPT in Portuguese) in Brazil, and the body image of a group of six students from the IFRN - Canguaretama *Campus*.

The theoretical framework underlying some documents issued by the Ministry of Education on EPT (Short for « Professional and Technological Education » in Portuguese) and the institution's Political-Pedagogical Project (PPP) is influenced by Marxism, a theoretical-methodological current which believes that education should develop all dimensions of the individual's life, i.e. it should be omnilateral, providing an integral human formation. Thus, a misconception of body image can affect the way the subject positions themselves in the world, limiting their ability to have a healthy relationship to themselves and others (Sampaio; Lima Neto, 2019). This reality has implications for their educational process and, within it and considering the interface of their other social relationships, for their subjectivity.

In this sense, this study aims to understand how the pedagogical practices in Physical Education at the institution have affected the participants' body image. In addition, this study, duly approved by a Research Ethics Committee (CEP in Portuguese)³, was carried out during the period of social distancing adopted as a measure to contain the Coronavirus. For this reason, as it is further mentioned, the investigation used a peculiar procedure to gather the data, providing research in Education, and especially in Physical Education, with new theoretical-methodological elements for understanding the phenomena linked to corporeality.

¹ Dissertation entitled "*Mirror, mirror of mine*": a look at the pedagogical practices of physical education based on the body image of integrated high school students.

² The research was part of a project entitled *Body, gender and sexuality in vocational education: epistemological and subjective scenarios*, sponsored by the 2018 universal call of the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq).

³ CAAE 35355320.2.0000.5296. Ethics Committee of the University of Potiguar (UnP).



METHODOLOGY

Research characterization

In order to achieve our objective, while paying attention to non-quantifiable subjectivity and meanings, we carried out qualitative research, which, according to Minayo (2009), allows both the analysis and the interpretations to reach its deepest and most complex aspects of human behavior.

Additionally, in an attempt to identify and better understand the causes, reasons and factors that triggered the phenomena that characterize the investigated reality, we chose to carry out an explanatory type of research, characterized as a field study, as proposed by Gil (2017).

The composition of the group of participants

In order to compose the group of research participants, we turned to the IFRN Psychology Service. The psychologists have the habit of filing the appointments made with the students in an institutional system⁴, including the categorization of the identified complaints (for example: anxiety, violence, issues with sexuality, self-image, etc.).

At the start of the 2019 school year, when the investigation that led to this study began, there were some a significant number of consultations (relative to the previous year, i.e. 2018): out of 4,373 records, 288 were associated with issues relating to self-image. In a conversation with the psychologist at one of the institution's *campuses*, we were introduced to six students with complaints regarding self-esteem issues, according to the psychologist. All were female, of legal age and had consented to take part in the research⁵.

⁴ The *Unified Public Administration System* (Suap) was developed by IFRN employees and has already been adopted by many Brazilian institutions.

⁵ We didn't intend to select only women. However, among the students still enrolled *on campus*, the record of those who came to the psychologist with complaints about self-image/self-esteem was only of girls. Certainly, this data deserves analysis, which, due to methodological reasons, cannot be done on this occasion.



The first field research tool used was a *Google Form*, made up of three stages. The first part was made up of questions designed to outline the participant's socio-economic and demographic profile; the second concerned the Stunkard Silhouette Scale; the third, finally, sought to identify the level of satisfaction with body image. Once the questionnaire had been applied, we proceeded to execute the second data construction tool, namely the requested diary. Due to methodological reasons, we will focus exclusively on the data gathered using this last instrument.

The requested diary as a data construction technique

Initially adopted due to the context of social distancing required by the health crisis brought by Coronavirus, the diary allowed participants to tell their personal stories and experiences for a longer and more reflective period, choosing the environment and occasion they considered most comfortable. According to Meth (2019), this tool makes it possible to investigate participants' feelings and experiences, and is appropriate for addressing issues associated with situations of suffering, characterized as personal, delicate and difficult subjects.

The diary is a kind of notebook in which thoughts, feelings, emotions, and personal memories are routinely written down. We made some adaptations to the format of the traditional proposal, given the need to guarantee the privacy and safety of the participants. We proposed the procedure of the *Diary requested via WhatsApp*, an idea similar to that of the traditional diary, but instead of writing in a notebook, a group was created for each of the participants, in which only they and the researcher were part of. In these groups, the students made their entries privately, with the freedom to type, include photos, record audio or videos as they wished.

As we were specifically interested in getting to know their experiences, episodes, and relationships with an emphasis on the body, we provided a script to guide the authors. The script was organized into three axes: the first one concerned family experiences; the second one was about school life; and the third, finally, concerned situations of suffering. The three



axes were crossed by the need to focus mainly on experiences relating to body image when writing. The script also included some supplementary questions to help develop the writing, such as: When did the situation happen? Where did it happen? Who was with you when it happened? What was the experience? How did you feel? How did you react? Finally, we've also provided a writing sample to help the subjects if they had any doubts.

Once the diaries were started, we didn't intervene. All we did was capture the entries as they became available. Additionally, we chose to keep the original spelling of the words written by the students in the diaries, in order to preserve the linguistic habit used in the digital media, in which this phase of the research took place.

The proposal consisted of keeping a diary for 30 days, starting from the first entry made by each participant. At the end of this time, we ended the WhatsApp groups. Generally, we noticed that the students wrote a lot on some days, while in others, there were only a few words or nothing at all. It was not uncommon for days to pass without any notes, so the participants were free to write as they saw fit.

Data analysis

To analyze the diaries, we used the Discursive Textual Analysis (DTA) theory, which a process that enables us to understand the totality of the content by analyzing its parts, and allows us to interpret the records. It is a "methodology for analyzing information of a qualitative nature with the aim of producing new understandings about phenomena and discourses" (Moraes; Galiuzzi, 2016, p. 13).

DTA, theoretically supported by Moraes (2003) and Moraes and Galiuzzi (2006, 2016), is organized into three stages. The first step of the process, named *unitarization*, consists of fragmenting the text into elementary units, deconstructing it in order to highlight the elements that constitute it, thus overcoming the superficiality of reading and immersing oneself in the meanings discovered. The second step, *categorization*, is characterized by organizing and establishing relationships and comparisons between the pre-defined units, or those identified during the interpretation process based on the text analyzed, organizing them



according to the similarities identified. The next step is the *elaboration of analytical meta-texts*, which, according to Moraes and Galiazzi (2016, p. 34), "represents an effort to make explicit the understanding that is presented as the product of a combination of the elements constructed throughout the previous steps".

In this sense, respecting the stages of the process proposed by Moraes (2003) and Moraes and Galiazzi (2006, 2016), we began with the first step of the process: unitarization. In order to identify the units of meaning, we invested in impregnating the contents of the diaries through intense and in-depth readings and, associated with this, we resorted to the use of *WordArt*, a virtual tool that allows a visual representation of the frequency of words in a text by creating a word cloud. The greater the number of citations of a word, the larger is its representation in the image generated, as can be seen in Figure 1.

Based on this process, the highlighted words in the cloud allowed us to identify the units of meaning present in the diaries for each of the research categories that had been established *a priori* - suffering, family and school - which also made up the three main axes of the script, as explained above. In order to define these three categories, we took into account the bibliographic productions that formed the theoretical framework for our study, and pointed to issues of suffering connected to body image, as well as social influences on the process of building body image, considering the idea that the process of socialization in adolescence takes place especially through the bonds established in the family and at school.



including family relationships - as we will go into more detail in the following stages of the DTA.

Furthermore, concerning the family category, we can also see words such as *Mother*, *Family* and *Home* standing out among the most mentioned, as well as the word *Father*, which, despite appearing less prominently, is still evident in the cloud. These results lead us to infer that, according to the students' perceptions, the relationships established with their bodies are directly related to family influences, information confirmed later in the DTA, as we will discuss throughout this section. Still regarding this category, we saw the term *Abuse* associated with some family situations, indicating that, in some way, these young women had their bodies abused in the family environment at some point in their lives.

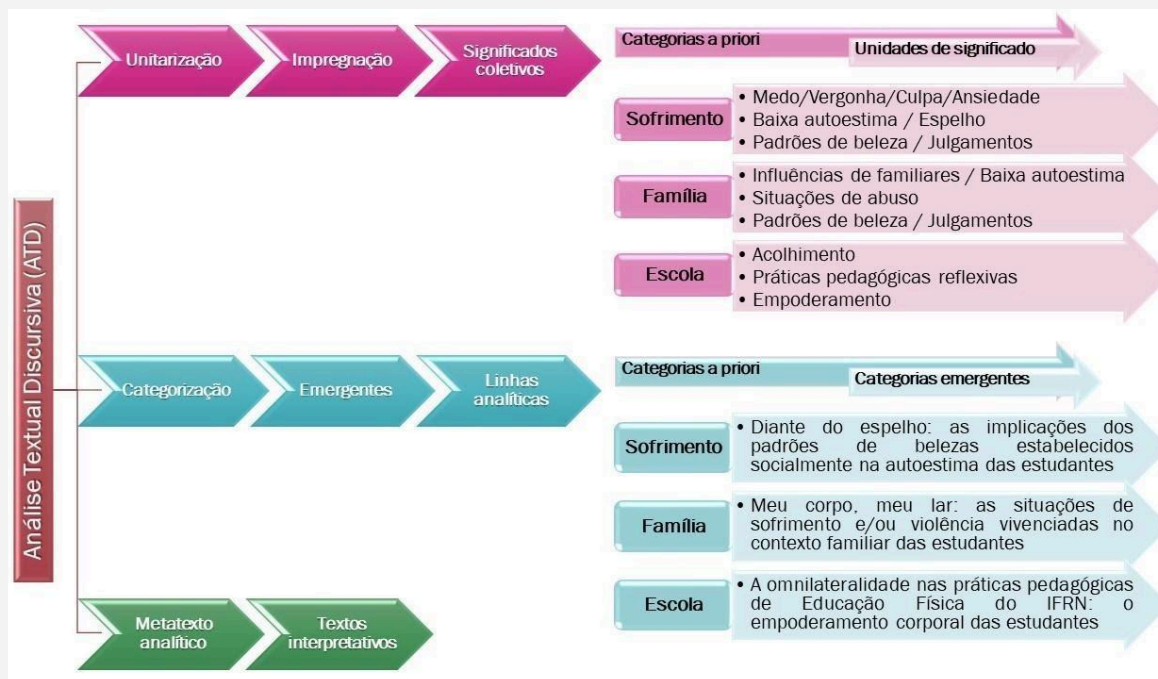
Next, about the the school category, we can see the significant presence of the term *IFRN*, which is associated with the words *School* and *Campus*, represented in a smaller size. This leads us to believe that, in the students' understanding, issues related to the body are somehow linked to the relationships established within the educational institution. In addition, we can also see other terms derived from the school context, such as *Physical Education*, *Classes*, *Psychologists* and *Teachers*, which point to the role of reflective pedagogical practices and the actors who make them up in welcoming the suffering of the participants in our study, as well as in the process of empowerment in relation to their bodies.

Based on this first stage of the DTA, we started to articulate the meanings according to their similarities and the interpretations, entering the process known as *categorization*. Once this stage was completed, we went on to build the analytical meta-texts that triggered the interpretative texts of our analysis and which will constitute the next subsections.

This process of constructing the DTA of the requested diaries - *unitarization*, *categorization* and *metatext* - can be better understood through the visual representation in Figure 2.



FIGURE 2 - Analysis of textual data



Source: elaborated by the authors (2021).

For methodological reasons, we will now focus only on a emerging category entitled *Omnilateralism in the pedagogical practices of Physical Education at the IFRN: the students' bodily empowerment*. Having said that, in the next section, we will present our understanding of the pedagogical practices especially provided by the Physical Education curricular component at IFRN, and the consequent empowerment acquired by the young women in the midst of these experiences.

INTEGRAL HUMAN FORMATION IN THE PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AT IFRN



In a study carried out by Pacheco, Nonenmacher and Cambraia (2020) with a group of students from the Integrated High School (EMI in Portuguese)⁶, which aimed to investigate the factors that may cause suffering and mental illness related to the school context, the students pointed out that their experiences in this environment can trigger a series of conflicts and emotional suffering. However, the results also highlighted the important role that interpersonal relationships within the institution play in dealing with these conflicts, whether they come from internal or external situations.

Towards this information, the reports recorded by the participants in our study in their diaries show the establishment of a strong emotional bond with the IFRN regarding how they relate to the school. They often refer to the institution as an extension of their homes, transcending the restricted teaching-learning relationship of purely cognitive content commonly attributed to the school environment. Much of this bond is due to the different ways they feel welcomed at the institution and is signaled by them in the various situations of suffering they report.

We can see this information in Maria's statement⁷ (2020):

IF became my second home. In 2017, when I was approaching the first day of school, I was aware that my life was going to change a lot, but I knew it was going to be very difficult, I was going through a very difficult phase, when I discovered that I actually had an anxiety disorder, and... I was taking medication, undergoing treatment, and I knew that I... was going through several crises, and... IF also brought me a family, people that... I started to live with, sometimes longer than the people at home, that's for sure. And... I really got to know friendship, loyalty and how to be a better person, and I've certainly evolved a lot. And I'm very grateful for everything that IF has given me, and still gives me.

The social relationships established at the institution were favorable for this young woman to feel welcomed in the face of the emotional conflicts she faced when she joined the institution, favoring her maturation. This attribution of IFRN as a second home, as well as the

⁶ It is a method that links secondary education to vocational training in an integrated way, as well as providing access to research and extension practices. At IFRN, EMI lasts four years.

⁷ In order to preserve the anonymity of the participants' identities, we decided to give them codenames, alluding to women who are references in EPT studies in Brazil: Acácia Zeneida Kuenzer, Lucília Regina de Souza Machado, Maria Ciavatta, Marise Nogueira Ramos, Monica Ribeiro da Silva and Sílvia Maria Manfredi.



mentioning of the importance of the relationships established during her time at the school, were also present in Silvia's diary (2020):

IFRN brought me so many feelings that I can't even define exactly what I got out of it. But it certainly represents a second home, we cry with joy, sadness and even regret, we see ourselves as we really are, we fight, we make up, we accept each other and we learn without even realizing it, it goes far beyond an institution.

The student reinforces the importance of the institution in her life, and attributes part of her personal evolution to the process of omnilateral development provided by IFRN. Additionally, situations of cultural diversity experienced within the institute were present in several excerpts from the diaries, which is a concept that is alligned with the proposals put forward in the IFRN's PPP, as can be seen in the following example:

At first, IFRN was just an opportunity to get a better education. However, when I joined the institute, I found myself surrounded by people very different from me, with different thoughts and cultures, which made me grow a lot. The IFRN represents maturity for me, not only professionally and academically, but above all humanly. The IFRN taught me and teaches me a lot, I'll never leave it behind, it's part of me (Acácia, 2020).

This affective bond is generally associated with the welcoming situations experienced and reported by the girls throughout their records. This bond plays an important role in the process of learning to cope with negative feelings, as well as in their relationships with self-image conflicts, as one of the girls reports:

The IF is my mother and father. It's a relationship that goes far beyond a high standard education; within the IF, I've experienced many processes, good and enriching, others uncomfortable, but with important discoveries. Within the *campus*, I've come to understand the body, gender, class, space and how all these things relate to me. The IF represents very high levels of an intense feeling that I call love and gratitude. There were very important moments for my bodily discovery on *campus*. Issues of acceptance of my skin, be it acne or race, the IF has always been very present. I often went to Ana Lúcia⁸ [*campus* psychologist] to talk about my discomfort with my body, the comparisons I had always made with other unique beauties, the need to accept myself before expecting people to accept me, my fear and insecurity in personal relationships. All of these things IF was part of and, in

⁸ Pseudonym adopted to preserve the psychologist's anonymity.



particular, I classify them as all body-related. I received a lot of support. The social work girls, my teachers and many of my friends have always been helping me to shape the view I have of my body (Monica, 2020).

By mentioning that she has learned about her body, gender issues, class differences etc., the student confirms that practices have been put in place that favor an integral human formation, as advocated by the EPT pedagogical proposal. Likewise, the student highlights the role of the institute in establishing a favorable relationship with her body image.

Furthermore, Monica states how fundamental some characters were in this welcoming process, pointing out the role of the institution's psychologist, as well as the social workers and teachers in reformulating the attributions she herself gave to her body image. This statement reinforces the role of Student Assistance in the development of the integrative pedagogical practices proposed by the PPP, and points to the important role of this integration in fostering student acceptance and a process of empowerment.

In this sense, the reports presented here corroborate with the study by Pacheco, Nonenmacher and Cambraia (2020), which showed the perception of a group of EMI students regarding the importance of support from psychologists in the process of learning how to deal with their conflicts and fighting mental illness. This perception is validated in the writings of all the students, who, in a fluctuating way, point out the transformative role played by Student Assistance in their lives, especially regarding their suffering and the development of self-esteem, as can be reinforced in the following excerpts:

Ana Lúcia - the *campus* psychologist - helped me realize that I can move on and turn what once hurt me into something good (Acácia, 2020).

I have anxiety and I've always had problems with my self-esteem, and in the first and second year, especially, I was always in crisis because of the IF, this was between 2017 and 2018, and one person who always helped me resolve these issues was Ana Lúcia, so I always counted on her support when I was a bit desperate, because it's quite difficult to talk about my problems with other people, because even with friends, I have a hard time doing so (Maria, 2020).

One of the students also refers to the psychologist as a central element in the process of self-acceptance and maturing, and also adds the figure of the Physical Education teacher among the personalities involved in this process. This leads us to assume that this curricular



component occupies a significant place among the institution's emancipatory and empowering pedagogical practices:

At this point, the Physical Education teacher was very important to me, as was the psychologist, who helped me to gradually return to who I really was. I'm leaving IF much better, stronger and more mature than I left, and I owe a lot of that to these two women, who made a difference to my life and don't even know it. The IF is a home that welcomed me and made me grow (Marise, 2020).

Similarly, another participant in our study recalls moments of suffering she faced regarding to her body at one point in her life. In addition to the emotional support provided by the psychologist and teachers, she highlights the comfort she found in discussions held by staff in general. She also highlights the development of pedagogical practices that incite reflection on socially established body standards:

There was a year when I couldn't deal with my feelings and emotions at all, I felt so overwhelmed and there were times when I just wanted a shoulder to lay my head on. That's when I lost a lot of weight and felt awful, everyone commented on it [...]. There was a mixture of feelings, all that anxiety that suffocated me, the mistrust... I went to Ana Lúcia [the psychologist], not in every crisis, but she didn't give up accompanying me. Not to mention the speeches, which were all very moving. As for the teachers, staff and management, we see a lot of diversity. It's obvious that most people's minds are well up to date with our body standards, we see this in conversations and even in observations made in the classroom, and that's very comforting (Silvia, 2020).

However, changes in the way of thinking and acting about their bodies are do not happen immediate, as soon as they join the institution. The diaries reveal that, in the initial years, still immersed in conflicts over body image, the girls experienced moments of suffering:

My first experience in which I was a bit panicked was when I had my first Physical Education practice, in the first year, in 2017, which was in the swimming pool, and I hate taking my glasses off, I can't take my glasses off because I'm ashamed of my strabismus, I've always been ashamed. And there was also the question of my body, of not feeling comfortable in a bikini, in a swimsuit, in front of other people [...] not just at school, but also on beaches, in other places where I need to be like this, because I'm very ashamed of showing my weaknesses (Maria, 2020).



This young woman makes it clear that she perceives her body as one of her weaknesses, as well as reiterating her shame about her own body and her fear of being exposed to the social mirror, whether internally or externally in the school environment. Another situation present in the writings, in addition to the moments in the swimming pool, concerns the physical education practices focused on dance:

[...] when it came to the dancing, I ended up not dancing out of panic at seeing so many people watching me, and that made me really scared and I ended up not taking part. There were things I wanted to do, but I didn't out of fear of being judged by people, it's a trauma of mine, so I end up giving up doing things I'd enjoy. In fact, I'm sure I would have enjoyed the experience, just like everyone else who took part did (Maria, 2020).

We can see the student's conflict at feeling exposed in front of several mirrors. Once again, concern about the gazes and judgments of others is present in the narrative of these young women. Furthermore, in two of the records presented by Maria (2020), she regrets not allowing herself to take part in the experiences, which demonstrates a different relationship currently established with her body and the maturity acquired over the years at IFRN.

This change in behavior is noticeable in various excerpts of the diaries. As they experienced the diversity of reflective pedagogical practices on body issues, offered especially by Physical Education, they gradually changed the way dealt with their conflicts. The students built a new relationship with their body images, which leads us to affirm that the institution has materialized its theoretical conceptions presented in the PPP and in the Physical Education Discipline Work Proposal (PTDEM in Portuguese) (IFRN, 2012a, 2012b).

In this sense, going against Maria's behavior in these last testimonies, Acácia (2020) shared with us a different attitude towards an equivalent situation. The young woman exposed her feelings when she allowed herself to experience one of the pedagogical practices proposed by the Physical Education teachers. On this occasion, the students had to perform as a group in a dance exhibition for internal and external audiences:

That was difficult [...] It was one of the hardest things I did at IFRN. A great support for me was the physical education teachers, the psychologist and a few friends. It really surprised me how they didn't act as if everything that was going on inside me



regarding to my body was just anything. They really took notice. It made all the difference that people believed in what was happening to me when I so often wanted to deny it and hide. They helped me face reality and move on.

The importance of developing emancipatory pedagogical practices in the process of these students' integral development is clear, as is the essential role played by the people who participate in the educational institution by welcoming and supporting adolescents in the face of their insecurities, in order to empower them towards body acceptance.

Still on this subject, another student added a record of her experience in another pedagogical practice provided by the Physical Education curriculum, especially aimed at reflecting on issues related to the body, beauty standards and the suffering experienced in the midst of all this:

Before I joined IF, I had a lot of trouble accepting my body and my hair. At my old school, no one had ever seen my natural hair. But when I joined IF, a lot changed. I think the most striking moment for me in this regard was in the first few weeks, one of the first physical education classes, when the teacher held a debate with the class about these body issues and made us reflect on what beauty is and why we need to keep fitting into a standard that society imposes. This lesson was very important in my class, it touched everyone, many people talked about things that I couldn't imagine they went through; I thought I was the only one suffering from so many unimportant things. There were lots of people crying and talking about their problems with their bodies (Marise, 2020).

The student's narrative recalls the difficulty of acceptance she suffered before joining IFRN, while also highlighting the role played by the institution in changing this scenario. In this sense, this story points out that, during this experience, the students were able to share their feelings and realize that they were not the only ones suffering from their body image. This perception sensitized the following young woman, while also awakening empathy and respect for differences:

[...] there I realized that I wasn't the only one suffering with my body, and I understood how we can let people interfere in our lives, and that it's not nice. These classes were fundamental for me to understand that I am the way I am and it's okay. It was also important for me to accept other people as they are, and for them to accept and respect me as I am (Marise, 2020).



The experience was fundamental in triggering a process of reflection and acceptance in the teenager. In addition, she completes the story by emphasizing the role of this pedagogical practice in putting an end to the deprivation of rewarding moments, previously repressed by conflicts with her own body:

This was so important that I stopped straightening my hair, I now wear it natural and this has been one of the best things that has happened to me since I joined IF. You can't explain the feeling of freedom it is to have a shower and leave the house with wet hair, without having to wait ages for it to dry and then go straighten it. As a result, I also started to enjoy things I didn't do before, I started going to the beach again, bathing in the sea, taking part in practical physical education classes, I even started practicing sport and never missed a class in the pool, which were the ones I liked best (Marise, 2020).

In this way, the IFRN's contribution to the students' reflection on current beauty standards is evident, as well as the extent to which the bodily practices developed at the institution can foster the bodily emancipation of these young women, raising awareness for the value of their bodies, regardless of appearances, giving them self-confidence and contributing to their self-esteem.

Additionally, the Physical Education pedagogical practices presented are in line with the PTDEM of this curricular component, which promotes the development of educational activities that enable critical analysis of issues relating to body images, as well as the formation of critical, autonomous and empowered subjects (IFRN, 2012b).

This empowerment through critical, reflective and emancipatory pedagogical practices was explicit in the diaries of all the participants in our study, as in the following excerpt:

Learning about my body was one of the best things IF taught me, because it was something for my life, it changed my life. Today I don't look at other girls and want to be the same, or judge them for what they are. I look at other people and respect them for who they are, and I know that behind any body that may seem out of line there may be someone very special (Marise, 2020).

When analyzing this excerpt from Marise's diary, one can see the importance she attaches to the learning provided by the practices developed at the IFRN. Furthermore, the student expresses recognition and respect for the diversity of bodies, as well as the realization



that there is no need to try to fit into a beauty standard in order to be held in high esteem. In this sense, the participants reveal that they currently have a more satisfactory relationship with their body images, they handle the mirror better, they no longer feel intimidated by other women's bodies, nor by the looks attributed to their own bodies:

Today it's less difficult to look at myself in the mirror, to take a longer shower, to choose an outfit; before it wasn't. [...] Going out in the street is something natural, I actually enjoy it and I don't compare myself to every girl I meet. But everything is still a process that I'm gradually going through [...] I stopped wanting to change my body so that people would accept me or love me. Today I can receive compliments and believe that they are sincere. I've forgiven myself for all the years I mistreated my body with bad food. I've forgiven myself for a lot of things and I've forgiven my body too, it's my home and I need to take good care of it. I don't mutilate it anymore and I'm gradually trying to lead a healthier life, this time not to have a socially accepted body, but because I want to be who I am, the best person I can be. [...] As I grew to love myself, I gained more autonomy over myself and a sense of responsibility, I stopped putting all the "blame" on my history for my overweight and low self-esteem. I began to no longer see my pain as the worst of all (Acácia, 2020).

[...] my self-esteem has changed a lot, I've managed to grow up, I'm not afraid to be myself, to say the things I think, to act the way I want, without any fear of other people's opinions. I feel much better about myself today, it doesn't matter so much if I'm not good enough, or anything like that. It's fine the way it is. [...] All that has passed and even if someone says something bad to me, I don't care because I've learned to like who I am and I won't trade my taste for someone else's (Lucília, 2020).

This empowerment, as we generally see in the diaries, comes from various pedagogical practices developed by Physical Education (but also, of course, by other subjects), the Psychology Service, and Student Assistance in general. This process even resonates outside the school, in relationships with family members:

Today I feel better at home, I can talk to my parents better. [...] After some difficult things, many anxious crises, many discussions and many conversations with the psychologist, I opened up to my parents, and this really changed the way I saw myself, which doesn't mean that overnight I changed the way I saw my body, but I think I can say that from then on, I felt more loved and hated myself less. My house today is really my whole house, today I no longer spend the whole day inside my room crying or having bad thoughts about myself (Acácia, 2020).



The pedagogical practices offered by the IFRN, especially those offered in the Physical Education curricular component, related to body issues, provide these young women with a change in thinking and behavior in the face of suffering:

[...] I can only say that I am no longer the person I was, and I hope I don't continue to be the person I am today, I always want to have the opportunity to change, and accept the body I have, and understand that I can be loved, that I have a lot of love to give, and understand that someone who will meet me one day will understand the immensity that I am. The immensity that I am as a woman, the immensity that I am with my knowledge, the courage that is in me. I want to lift other people up, know how to say the right words at the right time and say that my body doesn't belong to anyone, my body doesn't hurt anyone, my body is good for being what it is (Monica, 2020).

The transformation brought about in and by the student over the course of the experiences provided by the IFRN's pedagogical practices is evident. This type of description is present in different parts of her diary and is enhanced when she shares an image of her body with us, shown in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3 - My body



Source: Monica's Diary (2020).



By analyzing the photo, we can see that the real image of the student's body has been exposed, without the use of gimmicks to misrepresent possible details that might have bothered her previously. Thus, this photograph reveals the constitution of a healthier relationship with her own body image.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the diaries showed that the psychologist and the Physical Education teachers predominantly played a leading role in mediating between these young people and the conflicts they were experiencing, especially with regard to their body image. This alerts us to the need for integration between the pedagogical practices developed in the classroom and those that take place in other institutional spaces-times, since, in general, the reports indicate that these actions take place in a fragmented way, going against the integrative proposal defended by the IFRN's PPP.

Additionally, Physical Education appears as a central curricular component in the process of developing pedagogical practices aimed at reflecting on issues related to the body and its social relations, which highlights its relevance in developing the emancipation and empowerment of students.

The analysis of the writings shows us that, over the course of their training at the institution, the students acquired autonomy, critical capacity, self-realization and empowerment through the conflicts they experienced both inside and outside the school, corroborating with the provisions of the guiding documents of the EPT and especially the PPP (IFRN, 2012a). This document proposes the adoption of pedagogical practices capable of understanding the human being in an omnilateral manner, taking into account their development in both cognitive, physical and emotional aspects.

However, some excerpts from the reports point to the need of other curricular components taking approaches related to the body, while also being handled by other actors besides the Physical Education teachers and the psychologist. Thus, this issue could be



included in the training process offered by the institution, as highlighted below by Marise (2020):

I think this is such an important subject that it should be dealt with more by other teachers, by other areas too, not just physical education. It's true that physical education talks more about the body and so on, but there are other teachers who could also talk about this. The body is part of our history and our lives, and PE shapes us for life.

In the teaching and learning process offered by the IFRN, it is important to invest further in the development of integrative and interdisciplinary pedagogical practices. Although we understand that body issues correspond to a theme inherent to Physical Education, we need to reinforce that it is the role of High School Integrated to EPT to implement non-fragmenting pedagogical practices, in opposition to reductionist perspectives of education, considering the education of the body in the context of integral human formation and overcoming the fragmentation between intellectual and manual labor, in order to promote the omnilateral formation of students (Araujo, 2013, 2014; Araujo; Frigotto, 2015; Maciel, 2018; Marinho, 2012; Marx, 1982, 1996, 2010; Moura; Lima Filho; Silva, 2015).

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