

## Ludic and nursery rhymes in children's swimming lessons: intermediation in the teachers perspective

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### Abstract

Initiation and adaptation to the liquid environment should be done as soon as possible, preferably by a trained professional, in which levels of psychomotor maturation of the child are respected. In this context, ludic and nursery rhymes have been used as a facilitating tool for children's understanding of swimming. In this view, class planning usually includes playful activities to teach children a number of aquatic possibilities. Teacher-student interaction has also been found to make the student feels safer and more motivated to do the proposed activity. The aim of this study was to analyse the teachers approach in children's swimming classes in relation to nursery rhymes and investigate the learning outcomes of children from 3-6 years of age from Curitiba. The study also aimed to investigate the methods in which the song is utilised within the classes, besides emphasizing which theoretical basis is used to include the song within the planning. Ten teachers from Curitiba were analysed for this study, in which their methodologies and grounding basis the nursery rhymes have been applied in their children's swimming classes. As a result, all teachers utilised songs as a teaching method in their plan in order to give playfulness to the classes, as well as a tool for socialization and adaptation to the wet environment, and also stimulating the students' creativity and willingness to learn. An alarming fact of this research was that only 20% of the teachers used some theoretical reference as a basis to include music in their classes. Thus, this study emphasizes the importance of the scientific basis to give scientific grounding to the planning with the inclusion of the nursery rhymes in children's swimming lessons.

**Keywords:** Swimming; Child; Nursery Rhymes; Learning; Ludic; Teacher.

### Introduction

Swimming become increasingly popular as an adhesion to physical activity practice, since it is a sport that brings many health benefits such as improvement in coordination, balance, agility, strength, develops psychomotor skills, spatial, temporal and rhythm notions, sociability as well as self confidence (Soares et al., 2014) and prevention of the cardiorespiratory and pulmonary diseases Cavalcanti (2016). The practice of this modality during childhood is still elucidated as an important stimulus for motor development, intelligence, studies have also shown that children practice swimming have a increased literacy levels. (Pagani, Soares, de Souza Lima. 2014).

Valesco (1994) states that swimming is one of the most sports that contributes to the student's growth and integral development, as well as general well being. Tahara (2007) adds that initiation is not an easy task, especially when there are traumas and fears experienced by the child who had an inadequate interaction, therefore the presence of a professional in the area is necessary. The author argues that there they need to be eclectic about their knowledge, obtaining knowledge in other areas, in order to help obtaining quality work.

Teaching is an exercise of immortality, since "the teacher somehow continues to live in the one whose eyes learn to see the world through the magic of the word" (Alves, 1994). Freire (2005) affirms that ludic in swimming lessons motivates the pedagogical relation, stating a relationship of adult and child. The teacher in this case, has the possibility to play with the student through the fantasy, nursery rhymes, storytelling, dramatizations and cooperative games.

Therefore, song is a way of building knowledge, arousing sensitivity, creativity, rhythmic sense, pleasure of listening to music and also instigates memory, concentration, attention, respect for others, and contributes to the construction of body awareness (Brescia. 2003). Understanding rhyme as something internal can be altered from external stimuli should be considered as psychological and emotional booster (Garcia e Santos, 2012).

The nursery rhyme itself can integrate singing and songs into interpretive movements, according to Hoch (1992), children's themes songs can integrate into their daily lives, creating a playful environment where the child can create and adapt in a safe and way to the swimming environment. The author argues that music creates possibilities of experiencing rhythms and simultaneously the children exercise through movements and

dramatizations and games, which increases motor learning experienced in children's swimming practices.

The aim of this study was to present a teachers approach of swimming classes through the use of nursery rhymes as a methodological tool among children from 3-6 years old. In this view, it is known that nursery rhymes are widely used as a facilitator in the process of learning swimming, however it is not an area that has specifically studied.

### Material & methods

The study took a qualitative approach, which was characterized by semi-structured interviews, observations and information analysis. According to Ludke and André (1986), this type of method can describe, analyze, understand any type of process that has been approached and experienced in an objective and subjective way, Alasuutari (1995) emphasizes that any research, either quantitative or qualitative, must include subjective elements, seeking an in depth understanding of the phenomena and their changes, within the social process.

The paper was developed in two stages, the first was done through bibliographical research, carried out in books, articles in specialized periodicals, and electronic data based, with the purpose of understanding participants related to children aquatic activities. The second stage was conducted through a series of semi-structured interviews on swimming teachers. The answers were interpreted and tabulated according to the categorization aspects used to perform the work, as this type of research allows us to gather other forms of communication in the personal contact between the researcher and the phenomenon to be investigated (Ludke and André. 1986). The quality and depth of the analysis can only be achieved through the application of different collection and observation techniques (Freitas and Janissek. 2000). Questions used in the semi-structured interviews can be found in Table 1.

**Table 1: Semi-structure questions elaborated for the interview.**

01	Do you use nursery rhymes during class?
02	If not, why
03	What are the objectives for the use of nursery rhymes in your class?
04	Do you see a relationship between the nursery rhymes and the learning process?
05	What is the reaction of the children during the utilization of nursery rhymes in swimming classes?
06	Do you notice any negative points or have any criticism about the use of music in children's swimming classes?
07	Do you use any scientific basis to use the nursery rhymes as a methodological tool?

The interview was validated by three teachers who work in the academic area with swimming lessons or who have already worked in the field of children's swimming classes.

The study sample consisted of ten teachers who provide swimming lessons in small gyms in the city of Curitiba. The reason small gyms was chosen was due to the fact that they do not use their training regime, which could influence the teacher's performance in relation to the application of the classes, thus, limiting their methodological freedom in relation to class planning using nursery rhymes. According to (Furtado, 2009) a gym is considered small as those with less than 500m<sup>2</sup> and up to 400 students, The inclusion criteria for the study was that teachers were registered in CREF-PR (Regional Council of Physical Education), and also who work in the area of children's swimming from the age of 3-6 years.

The results are organized in categorization according to the adapted model of Bardin (1977):

(...) one can say that what characterizes the qualitative analysis is the fact that the inference - whenever it is carried out - is based on the presence of the index (theme, word, character, etc.), and not on the frequency of its appearance in each individual communication (Bardin, 1977).

### Results

All teachers responded positively to the use of songs as a methodological tool. The objectives for the use of the nursery rhymes in the classes, were grounded with the teaching and learning process, in conjunction with ludic approach and theoretical reference. Tables 2-7 display the results from the interviews:

**Table 2. Teacher identification for the use the nursery rhymes and songs in their classes:**

GOAL: Outline which teachers use the songs during class	
Categorization aspects:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	
<input type="checkbox"/> No	
Obtained answers:	Categorization aspects
Yes (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10)	Positive Negative

When teachers were asked if there is a specific goal for inserting the song during the lessons, 80% of the interviewees attributed their use to the aspects of playability and learning facilitation. While, 20% of the teachers specified goals that refer to aspects of social interaction and motivation.

**Table 3: Identification and categorization for the goals for inserting songs during children's swimming lessons.**

GOAL: identify and categorize which are the goals of inserting songs in classes:	
Categorization aspects:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Motivation <input type="checkbox"/> Playfulness <input type="checkbox"/> Learning facilitator <input type="checkbox"/> Social interaction	
Teacher response:	Categorization aspects:
Playfulness (T1, T3,T4, T5, T7, T8, T9, T10)	Playfulness
Facilitate understanding and e learning stimulation (T2, T5, T6, T7, T9, T10)	Facilitate learning.
Interaction with classmates (T3, T4)	Social interaction
Motivation in class (T1,TP4)	Motivation

In relation to the learning process involving nursery rhymes, 90% of the teachers reported that the song facilitates learning, understanding as well as ludic. In addition, 30% of the teachers also used it as a tool for adaptation and interaction for the child to the water environment.

**Table 4: What is the relationship between the child and the music, observed by the teacher:**

GOAL: What is the child's reaction in relation to the learning process using nursery rhymes as a methodological tool.	
Categorization aspects	
<input type="checkbox"/> Learning movements <input type="checkbox"/> Relate the song to the movement <input type="checkbox"/> Relate the ludic to the movements <input type="checkbox"/> Interaction to the water environment	
Teacher response:	Categorization aspects
Facilitates learning and understanding (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T7, T8, T9, T10)	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning movements, relate the song to the movement, relate the ludic to the movements
It's an adaptation tool for the child (T2, T4)	Interaction to the water environment, learning movements
Interaction to the water environment (T2, T10)	Interaction to the water environment

Regarding the reaction of the students, 80% of teachers, observed happiness as a well-motivated feeling, whilst, 70% indicated the desire to learn. In this view 50% observed that the song caught the attention of the students and 20% believed that it makes the environment more pleasant and helps students to interact with the environment more.

**Table 5: Childs song interests:**

GOAL: Identify the interest of the child in classes that have songs in them.	
Categorization aspects:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Motivation <input type="checkbox"/> Social Interaction <input type="checkbox"/> Relationship between music and movements <input type="checkbox"/> Learning playfulness	
Teacher response:	Categorization aspects
Happiness (T1, T2, T3, T5, T7, T8, T9, T10)	Motivation
Willingness to learn (T2, T3, T6, T5, T6 T7, T9)	Relationship between music and movements
Social Interaction (T4)	Social Interaction
More pleasant environment (T4, T10)	Playfulness
Childrens attention (T1, T5, T7, T9, T10)	Concentration in class

When questioned This examined the teachers' observation of the positives or negatives points for the use of nursery rhymes. The general consensus was that no negative results were obtained from the use of nursery rhymes (Table 6).

**Table 06: Negative points of using nursery rhymes in class:**

GOAL: Identify any negative points for the use nursery rhymes in children's swimming classes	
Categorization aspects:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Scattering	
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of interest	
Teacher response:	Categorization aspects
No (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10)	No

Finally, the teachers were asked regarding the methodology used to propose songs as a methodological tool in their classes. Here only 20% of teachers use some theoretical or scientific basis.

**Board 06: Identify scientific basis and grounding used by teachers:**

GOAL: Categorize the scientific basis used by teachers to make their nursery rhyme planning.	
Categorization aspects:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Uses a specific methodology	
<input type="checkbox"/> Has an author as basis	
Teacher response	Categorization aspects
Piaget (T8, T9)	Has an author as basis
Jocian Bueno (T8)	Has an author as basis

### Discussion

From the results of this study, we can verify that there is a work profile of the teachers who work in the area of children's swimming from 03 to 06 years old. The research being outlined with teachers, some with more extensive training than others (postgraduate, specialization courses among others) as well as, from different gyms. In this view, there is still an unanimous positive response regarding the use of songs in class and a proximity in the responses of all to the use them as a pedagogical method. The use of nursery rhymes and songs in the methodology of the teachers demonstrated a wide range of options and support to the activities developed in their classes, as quoted by T5:

"... my students associate movement with music, making it easier for them to memorize, it helps with all activities involving recreation and student learning..."  
(interviewee T5)

This teaching tool, through the use of singing toys, musicality, stories and games, can be observed in the literature of Garcia and Cavalari (2010), in order to engage the child in swimming. In this view, it is clear that the use of songs as a way of learning in the practice of children's swimming is a positive one. When asked about the goals for the insertion of the nursing rhymes in classes, the answers were directed to aspects of playfulness and learning as cited by T7:

"...I generally use the songs with a ludic goal that the songs have an objective of learning, of some content of the class ..." (interviewee T7)

In this way, we can understand that ludic in swimming lessons motivates the pedagogical and learning relationship (Freire and Schwartz. 2005), and according to Winterstein (2002, pg. 23):

"An influencer (teacher) and the influenced (student), establish a relationship in which it privileges this influence as a form of active participation between the teacher and the student, through the permission of playing in a water environment. Thus, building affective bonds between them and bilateral relationship, where both the student and the teacher learn in this construction of knowledge"

This learning process is mediated by the teacher, whom participates in the classroom and helps in the interaction between classmates and the water environment. Aspects also cited by teachers are supported by Graef and Cruel (2006, p222) "(...) interaction and adaptation with the water environment is always present, and some elements are demonstrated inside and outside the water." The teacher is associated with the learning of movements, pedagogical practices and integral development of the student, these innumerable benefits are also mentioned by Marin (2004, p. 2) "the aquatic environment provides many benefits in different spheres: physical, physiological, cognitive, psychomotor, social, affective and emotional, and therefore will allow us to achieve the integral development of the student." Goals should be structured and worked on daily with planning and dedication, and must have a reciprocal relationship with their students.

Happiness and longing for dynamic and interactive classes between students and teachers was another factor pointed out in the interviews. This acts in conjunction with the child's interest in the activity, swimming lessons have a great attraction for students because it provides the possibility of playing and get wet simultaneously, while being able to dive and thrust. Gallahue and Ozmun, (2003) states that this: "(... ) makes classes a distinctive and fun environment. " it develops skills that will enable the child to experience a place that

offers many benefits and pleasures, pleasant sensations which are also full of challenges or requirements.

Nursery rhymes and musicality are strongly embedded in the work developed by teacher. It is a tool that can be used daily in their classes, and can be used as a methodological too, Many songs are materials adapted from social media, television and are generally songs of easy understanding and assimilated by all students, as quoted by the interviewee T5: "(...) the songs (...) help in all the activities that involve recreation and facilitate learning of the child, you sing a little from row-row-row your boat and they know what it is, they already begin to move their arms."

Another aspect for the use of songs during class is related to the fact that in swimming the aquatic experiences can bring scattering of the children, and the songs help to catch their attention. This was another factor pointed out by the teachers interviewed, as quoted by T8:

"... their attention changes and they get less agitated and more concentrated, besides being more cheerful and active at the moment they are performing the movement proposed in he song..."(Interviewee T8)

In teaching, it is expected that the student understands and assimilates the information provided by the teacher, retaining it and using it in order to assimilate each experience in swimming lessons. Throughout the development of the teaching process, of learning any exercise or physical activity, the student goes through several stages of changes occur in their motor and physical process, among all this, there is also a great demand for attention, change and learning that begins from the moment in which the child is being exposed to the activity, Ladewig quotes (2000, p.63) "it is the retention of relevant information to the activity that we are carrying out. Improving the selection of relevant information may facilitate the anticipation of the response and, consequently, facilitate the mastery of the activity".

All the teachers in this study used songs in their classes (table 1), the answers were in agreement, and all were used for a specific purpose. These were included, using as a range from playful aspects, learning, providing social interaction through music and movements. All teachers responded that they do not observe any negative points in the use of songs in pedagogical practice.

However, one factor that drew attention was that only 20% of teachers used a scientific basis or author basis. With these results we may assume that teachers imitate or reproduce observed classes, with no or very little scientific and methodological basis. For example, Demo states (1996, p.9), "the attitude of the copycat, who copies, reproduces and proves predominates among us." This idea is confirmed together with a Darido (2001) whom states, that this fact is mostly due the source of knowledge e of teachers, specifically Physical Education teachers." Thus, it is observed that the lack of a solid foundation is essential for the assembly and development of the classes as quoted by Rejane apud Freire (2013, p3):

The conscious practice of the teacher who plans, who demonstrates interest and values the information of its students will create an environment of respect and reciprocal learning, since we are always in constant intellectual improvement. This methodological knowledge is necessary in all aspects of children swimming, not in content reproduction, but in the improvement of the learning process. Ludic through the use of nursery rhymes, emphasized motivational aspects, the conviviality of the students with the classmates, interaction with the water environment and a more pleasant environment for play. However, very few interviewees used scientific and theoretical background,. This factor raises questions because teachers only pass on information acquired through practice, as Fernandes and Souza (2006) states "(...) the lack of consistent theoretical basis, that is, of a pedagogy for swimming, led many teachers to adopt their own methods." Since this area is linked to playfulness, as it is observed in the research, music is a popular method of teaching by swimming teachers, but the value of the scientific basis is still not adopted well. This requires an in-depth specialization within the proposed theme that can change this lack of knowledge and the further progress the use of nursery rhymes. This would help the teaching method to become more grounded and even more researched as a theme for new projects.

## Conclusion

Based on the interviews and studies cited in this article, it can be argued that the benefits of inserting songs into children's swimming lessons are beneficial. Ranging from playful aspects, learning facilitation, generating motivation and joy during classes, increasing concentration, contributing to social interaction as well as the adaptation to the water environment.

The choice of songs and the number of positive points used in classes main aspect of our research. This data also shows that no negative aspects were concluded by all the interviewees, demonstrating it to be an interesting methodology. By bringing this resource to children's swimming lesson, it is clear that children are more committed and have a higher adherence to classes because it makes it more fun and interesting. In this view, one can seek a more playful and less technical class thinking about the use of songs as a methodological tool. In conclusion, all teachers interviewed used nursery rhymes as an aid tool or main tool in the development and application of their classes, and all pointed out positive aspects. On the other hand, only two teachers used some scientific basis for the application of this resource in classes. This concluded that the use of nursery rhymes is being done through a reproduction of what the teacher learnt from other teachers. Indicating the need for more research to be acquired and utilized by teachers who use musical methodologies in their classes.

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