

# **THE DISCIPLINE "BODY, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT IN A MASTER'S COURSE AT UNIVERSIDADE SANTA ÚRSULA, BRAZIL": LEARNING STRATEGIES AND COLLABORATIVE TEACHING**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Professional Master's in Work Management for the Quality of the Built Environment, MPGTOAC has existed at the Universidade Santa Úrsula, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, since the beginning of 2015. The body is one of the substantive elements of the course. It emerges as an elective discipline. The purpose of this communication is to refine the understanding of the central ideas of the discipline 'Body, culture and environment' of the master, combined with the situation of Covid 19. A complementary bibliography of the discipline was presented, and some works were described and commented on. We took Howard Becker's book "Mundos da Arte" Becker [1] as a theoretical reference in the pedagogical field, to move forward with the idea of collaborative pedagogical work. By confronting theory with pedagogical practice, we achieved two dynamics applied in the first half of 2020, during Pandemic Covid 19. The first, 'Domestic ethnography before and after Covid 19'. Covid 19's impact on the home and student world was considered. Scenes in the residential environment of each student made it possible to visualize the accommodation of the houses, to the circumstances of the daily domestic and working lives of each student, during the Pandemic, with a strong impact on everyone's body scheme; the second, 'Body and affection in Pandemic, from Paul Klee', allowed students to express their questions and express the feelings and reflections arising from a world altered by the effect of the pandemic. Many of these issues are linked to one's body scheme. As a result of the proposed dynamics, the class reacted with hope of overcoming. In a balance between the restrictive situations of the Pandemic, which often led to the feeling of sadness, fear and malaise, and, prospective situations, after the Pandemic, the group envisioned the possibility of advancing and overcoming a localized period of impossibility circulation and contact. Faced with current limits and future possibilities, the group showed a positive expectation for the future. The reflection based on the study of dynamics carried out during the course 'Body, culture and environment' allows us to think about the possibility of replicating playful

referrals similar to those described here, for the next times that the discipline is taught.

**Keywords:** *Cooperative Learning and Teaching. Experimental Education. New Tools for Teaching.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Professional Master's in Work Management for the Quality of the Built Environment (MGTQAC) is linked to the Interdisciplinary Area, of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), the body that regulates Brazilian postgraduate studies.

The Professional Master's is a type of post-graduate *strictu-sensu* oriented to the “training of professionals in different areas of knowledge, through the study of techniques, processes or themes that meet some demand in the labor market” [2]. The master's degree is sought by students graduated in several areas such as Architecture, Law, Administration, Engineering, Medicine, among others, and working in the labor market.

'Body, culture and environment' is an elective discipline. In order to relate the different professional fields of the students, to the thematic nucleus body, culture and environment, we take as a reference, alongside the basic and complementary bibliography that formally integrates the discipline, a list of references related to the thematic nucleus and the pedagogical guidance.

We chose to carry out a collaborative pedagogical approach in the classroom, to alternate exposure and theoretical reflection, with reading and writing shared among students. To support this pedagogical approach, we highlight a work that offers paths for this type of pedagogical approach.

The work “Mundos da Arte”, by Becker [1], a sociologist active in the United States of America, started from a comparative approach and from descriptive and interpretive references to study collective and collaborative practices in the field of arts. It identified ways of acting common to these practices. For him 'conventions', 'socially constructed modes' and 'collective action practices' are used by a wide range of actors to make different ways of making art viable. All of these actions are collaborative. They show us how to carry out a project collectively.

We identified 5 confluence fields, to support the field of study about the body with students: body and anthropology, history of the body, body and work, body and psychology, and body and game. For each of these fields, we selected significant works. The works related to the subject 'Body, culture and environment' were made available to students in a wide list and briefly commented on the first day of class. We included the authors Costa [3], Vigarello

[4], Foucault [5], Herold Júnior [6], Weil [7] and Goldenberg [8], among others. For the end of this communication, we also chose 4 works to comment briefly:

They include two thematic fields of confluence worked on in the course we taught: body and anthropology and body and game.

Thematic field: body and anthropology:

The text by French anthropologist and sociologist Marcel Mauss “The techniques of the body” [9], was written in 1934. The remote reflection is still a reference in the area, given the originality of the analysis. It presents the notion of “body technique”, taking the body as “the first and most natural instrument of man”. The author believes that, before instrument techniques, there is a set of body techniques, which can be transmitted. For the author, there is no technique and “there is no transmission, if there is no tradition”; lists “principles for classifying body techniques”; and lists “body techniques” in their wide variance, according to age, income, the possibility of transmission and cultural origin.

Le Breton's work “Anthropology of the body and modernity” [10] starts from the understanding of the body as a theoretical construction, used to culture and reaches the understanding of the body as a symbolic construction. He studies various conceptions of the body in modern times, reaching the present day in the western world. In the 1960s, it distinguishes the influence of the media in the construction of the idea of the body; and the progressive movement to separate popular knowledge, from erudite culture, especially in relation to the biomedical scope.

The contributions of Mauss and Le Breton are of interest to the course, as the first helps reflective and intercultural thinking, and can be applied to the understanding of the possibility of the permanence of traditional body techniques, in dialogue with the body techniques that are instituted, with the gradual arrival of each progressive technological advance; and the second favors the understanding of the emergence and gradual implementation of body patterns today, as it allows to understand the challenges that new languages, brought by the advent of the use of the computer and the advancement of the algorithm, impose on the automation process at work and how can do to accommodate them to the desirable and friendly practices of the citizen, on a daily basis and at work, in a society that wants to be supportive, friendly and inclusive.

Body and game themed field:

In the book “Homo ludens: The game as an element of culture” the anthropologist Huizinga [11] studies ‘Nature and meaning of the game as a cultural phenomenon’. The author believes that the game is inherent to human culture and, in a way, to animal culture. The author believes that there is a “significant” function in the game, of a different nature from current life. It studies

formal characteristics of the game and understands the game “within certain limits of time and space” It considers the existence of a playing field and rules, rhythm and harmony in games. Relates game to myth, ritual and party.

The book “Games of the World” by German journalist and researcher Grunfeld [12] describes and illustrates 72 types of games that exist in various countries around the world. Segments games into classes: “board & table game; field and forest games; party and festival games”; and “puzzles, tricks and stunts”. It presents richly illustrated material, containing rules and how to make each game.

Huizinga and Grunfeld's contributions are of interest to the course, as the first deepens the theoretical question about the playing field and its understanding. Segments game comprehension extracts, which can be applied to each particular game; the second offers us a rich set of games, including variants of them in different countries. It allows us to achieve the structure and rules of each particular game.

If we consider the existence of gambling in man's society and culture, the study of traditional gambling will be of interest. Traditional games can be observed in society and culture, a field of foundation for the authors studied. Knowledge of traditional games can favor the adoption of a collaborative pedagogy as well as the proposition of technical products and work processes inserted in collaborative situations.

Inspired by the collaborative actions of art, proposed by Becker; supported by the understanding of the existence of body techniques, as studied by Mauss; with the contribution of the evolutionary understanding of body techniques in modernity, supported by Le Breton; with Huizinga's theoretical contribution on structure, nature and meaning of games; and accompanied by the wide repertoire offered by Grunfeld, we built our course, in the first half of 2020, applied to the situation of Covid 19.

## **THE COURSE**

The ‘Body, culture and environment’ course interspersed slide presentations, with an oral presentation of the material; texts shared in the classroom, after having been previously read by the students, with dynamic proposals, based on collaborative games.

The two first authors of this communication were teachers of the discipline. The course included students who were beginning their master's degree in the first semester of classes.

The class regime was remote, but on line. We mean by this, that the course, previously in person, was adapted to be taught at a distance. There was a timetable and a fixed virtual room to enable classes to be held, previously scheduled for the

group of students enrolled in the discipline, in a synchronous manner. The Google Classroom platform and the Google Meet application, made available by Universidade Santa Úrsula, were used by teachers and students.

In this communication, we will stick to two dynamics applied by the teachers.

The dynamics were created together by the teachers. Each dynamic was applied by one of the teachers. They were applied in May 2020. The master class had 7 students.

### **Dynamic 1: Domestic ethnography before and after Covid 19**

*Dynamic objective:* Identify and describe domestic situations within students' homes, before and after Covid Pandemic 19.

*Description:* Each selected a domestic situation before the Pandemic and photographed it. Each selected a situation, in the same place, after the Pandemic and photographed.

*Selected situations:* Hall or entrance door of the residence of each one, before and after the Pandemic. In case of shoes on the floor, at the entrance door, 2 previously planned photos were taken. One without shoes, before Pandemic, another with shoes, after Pandemic. In the case of a bathroom sink, with alcohol gel, two photos were taken. One reconfiguring the sink as it was before the Pandemic, and the other as it was after the Pandemic.

#### *Comments:*

Several transformations were observed, with an impact on the body of each one, on a daily basis, after the Pandemic. With regard to housing, there was a reorganization of internal and sometimes external domestic space. Sometimes there was a change in the configuration of the house, either by relocating objects and furniture, in order to favor the accommodation of workstations, or by doing small domestic works, completely reconfiguring some rooms;

With regard to food: before the Pandemic there was the use of containers to facilitate the packaging of food, to be consumed outside the home, in the workplace, and after the Pandemic there was a need to stock more food to be consumed at home;

With regard to body care, new protocols were introduced, such as the use of masks, face protectors, and gloves. The regular cleanliness of the hands, sometimes caused injury, due to the recurrent use of disinfectants;

With regard to clothing, at home, these started to preferably contemplate the part from the waist up, with formal clothes, keeping the part from the waist down, with informal clothes. In the street it was common to use clothes that were easier to wash, due to the fact that they need to be repeatedly washed, in order to be disinfected, when they get home;

The coexistence offered greater regularity in the case of residents of the same residence and less regularity or absence of in-person coexistence, with friends and family members who did not live in the same residence;

With regard to entertainment, there was an adaptation to the type of leisure practiced, which now includes communication through “lives”, regular access to films and reading of books.

Procedure during the class: “synthesis with slides”:

First the students were invited to make a photographic record of different domestic situations. Then a slide show was made available in the ‘cloud’ to be developed jointly, including the photos that each one made available, to be later shared with everyone.

### **Dynamic 2: Body and affection in Pandemic, from Paul Klee**

*Dynamic objective:* Sensitize students through the enjoyment of images of works by Paul Klee, previously selected. What sensations, memories and feelings emerge from the visualization of the images of selected works, in the time of Covid 19?

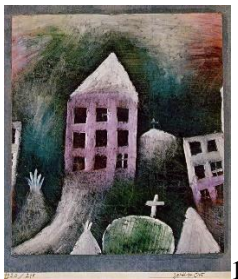
*Description:* The class was divided into 3 groups (there were 2 groups of 2 students and a group of 3 students); A pair of images was assigned to each group:

Selected works by Paul Klee:

#### **GROUP 1**

*Figure 1.1920.Paul Klee. Destroyed-place*

*Figure 2.1939.Paul Klee. Flowers-in-stone*



1



2

GRUPO 2

Figure 3.1921.Paul Klee. Rotating house

Figure 4.1930.Paul Klee. Refuge



3



4

GRUPO 3

Figure 5.1921.Paul Klee. Dream city

Figure 6.1926.Paul Klee. Reconstructing



5



6

*Procedures:* The students communicated via 'whats app' to exchange experience of viewing images intended for each group. Each group noted the sensations and ideas generated by viewing the images. One of the members of the group was the spokesperson for the result, to share with the class.

*Comments:* When presenting the comments on the works of Paul Klee, by the spokesman of each group, the work was designed in 'screen sharing', on the computer, cell phone or I Pad device, in order to allow everyone in the class, enjoy the same image.

Sensations of fear, apprehension, interrogation and malaise were expressed, on the one hand; and, feelings of desire to overcome, belief in a future start over on new bases, credit in exceeding limits and development of closer ties of coexistence, after Pandemia, on the other hand.

## METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the objective "to refine the understanding of the central ideas of the discipline 'Body, culture and environment' of the master, combined with the situation of Covid 19", we made written field observations, after each of the 12 dynamics performed in the classroom. We selected two, to analyze in depth. We comply with what the sociologist and researcher of education, the Brazilian Lüdke [13] teaches, by endowing the ethnographic precept of detachment, in the descriptive observations of the classroom, during and after the pedagogical set, facilitated by the fact that we act remotely, and with the camera turned off, at moments of written record during class. We followed the procedure of "strangling" the "familiar". In the case of a "total participant", when the researcher observes his own performance as a teacher, as it happened with us, "a general rule of thumb when to take notes, is that the closer to the moment of observation, the greater your accuracy". So we did it.

## CONCLUSION

The theoretical references presented at the beginning of this communication, supported the development of dynamics. They helped and pointed out the possibility of creating a study guide and the perspective of a master's project to be written by the students, with the intention of promoting solidarity and inclusive actions.

The two dynamics described demanded the cooperative work of the teams. They were created from playful situations. They mirrored each other and referred to collaborative games.

They had input from the art field. In the first case, "Domestic ethnography before and after COVID 19", photography was used as a recording instrument. The audio visual language was worked, together with the written language, in both cases. In the second case, "Body and affection in Pandemia, from Paul Klee" there was awareness based on the shared enjoyment of works of art by the artist chosen by us.

The pedagogical set in both cases had the presence of all the participants, students and one of the teachers. This was guaranteed by the presence of the entire group of students, interacting in remote synchronous class.

The field of the "pedagogical game" entered each person's home, in the first case and the individual sensations of each one, raised by the enjoyment of works of art, in the second case.

In the conflict between situations of restriction, caused by the pandemic, and situations of overcoming the current moment expressed by the group, the balance



was positive. Hope in the possibility of reaching a “normal”, in the near future, more citizen and solidary, proved to be alive.

The "meet" platform functioned as an interface to make each other's experience dialogue, with the game dynamics.

The dynamics presented allow to be replicated.

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