

# **General Gymnastics and its Applicability in the School and Social Environment: A Bibliographic Review**

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**Abstract**

*The subject of this paper is the history, concepts, aspects and importance of General Gymnastics. The purpose of this study was to make a synthesis of studies of doctrines and articles published in a journal, considering the relevance of General Gymnastics practice, for students within the school, and in life as to the numerous benefits it can bring. The methodology used was qualitative, with descriptive analysis. The study was supported by an integrative literature review, in which the search for scientific content was refined with the use of specific keywords related to the search theme, using the databases SciELO and Google Scholar.*

**Keywords:** Human Rights; Muscle Strength; Paraplegia; People with Disabilities; Resistance Training.

**1. Introduction**

The theme to which this work proposes is very widespread in discussions on Physical Education in schools and teaching, with regard to the preparation and experience of Teachers. General Gymnastics is a modality popularly known as Gymnastics for All, being an activity that encompasses several competitive and non-competitive modalities. Physical activities for a military training of citizens were offered during the Roman Empire, which generated strength and conditioning for young people. Among the various sports activities were jumping, running and ball games, thus configuring the gymnastics.

A brief history of gymnastics since antiquity, about 2,000 years before Christ, passing through Europe in the 19th century, will be presented in Chapter 2, also gymnastics when spread in half in the USA in 1830 by a German, starting with calisthenic processes. And finally, in 1960 the use of gymnastics devices began. Chapter 3 presents the concept of general gymnastics described as body movement, which encompasses several modalities and can be competitive or not. It is also possible to opt for the use of gadgets, choice of dress, number of participants and musical sense. Finally, the definition given by the Brazilian Gymnastics Confederation, clarifying that gymnastics can be divided into six modalities.

Chapter 4 presents Gymnastics at School, its brief history of introduction to Brazil, and teaching. It presents the authors that in order to work with gymnastics, it must be adequately trained and that Gymnastics must

be a necessary content in school Physical Education classes. The authors also affirm that gymnastics has not been much taught by the lack of experience of teachers.

In chapter 5, it is presented about Gymnastics in Life, countless benefits that it brings when practiced, brings the plurality of cultures of dances, folklore, and games, and the possibility of using various materials. And also, some objectives such as awakening joy, providing pleasure, physical and mental well-being.

In chapter 6 the methodology and the way in which this research was carried out is demonstrated, with the description of the terms used and the presentation of the databases chosen.

## **2. Methodology**

The methodological procedure used in this research was the integrative literature review, in which the searches are refined by means of descriptors related to the research theme. According to Gil (1991) they are techniques elaborated from material already published, consisting of articles, monographs, books and materials available on the Internet. Marques et al (2017) state that the bibliographic review is done through secondary data, by consulting different materials such as newspapers, magazines, encyclopedias.

The study was supported by an integrative literature review, in which searches for scientific content were refined with the use of specific keywords related to the search theme in the databases used by SciELO and Google Academic. As terms used were: General Gymnastics Concept; General Gymnastics Benefits; Gymnastics at School; History of Gymnastics; Characteristics of Gymnastics.

## **3. Brief history**

Since antiquity, gymnastics has been practiced (CAETANO, 2015). Since prehistory, the expression “gymnastics” was mentioned for any physical activity whose purpose was to organize man for his subsistence actions (FIORIN, 2002 apud CAETANO et al, 2015).

In the year 2006 before Christ, the Chinese practiced different kinds of gymnastics, called therapeutics, such as “Kung Fu”, with the objective of ensuring the immortality of the soul. Also in this sense, the Greeks sought exercises to relate mind and body, such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle who developed physical training seeking to establish harmony and effectiveness of movements. Physical activities for a military training of the citizens were offered during the Roman Empire, which generated strength and conditioning for the youth. Among the various sports actions were jumping, running and ball games, configuring the gymnastics.

According to Werner, Willians and Hall, (2015) in Europe during the 19th Century, German Friedrich Ludwing used physical education with a political imprint in order to provide freedom, which was the milestone in the beginning of modern artistic gymnastics. The Swedish gymnastics complex used equipment such as stairs, rings and plinths. In the same sense, however, according to Souza, (1997) apud Caetano (2015) exactly in the 19th century during the Contemporary Age, that the principles of gymnastics were based on the formation of French, German, Swedish and English schools, in charge of propagating gymnastics in the world.

In the mid-1830s, Catherine Bucher shaped German gymnastics within the United States, enabling an accessible and delicate caesthetic exercise method that was performed with music. Rudolf Laban, a

German fugitive in England, stayed there with modern dance, working with body and space knowledge. In 1960, as in Germany, with wide popularity in the United States and also in other parts of the world, Liselott Diem developed programs, based on the investigation of structured scenarios with the use of gymnastics devices (WERNER, WILLIAMS and HALL, 2015).

Ramos (2008), adds that Physical Education in the 1870's was hygienic, where the concern was directed to health and personal hygiene.

#### **4. Conceptualizing general gymnastics**

General Gymnastics is a modality popularly known as Gymnastics for All, it is a body movement pointed out as a combination of other modalities of gymnastics (RAMOS, 2008).

Gymnastics is an activity that encompasses several competitive and non-competitive modalities and bypasses the practice of a sequence of movements that require strength, flexibility and motor coordination for physical and mental improvement (LAFFRANCHI B, 2001 apud GUIOTTE et al, 2015).

According to Araujo and Guzzoni (2016) general gymnastics has an individuality, which is freedom, out of step with the others that because they are competitive, imposes itself and dominates by means of codes. The author makes some notes about this freedom provided by general gymnastics, adding that it can be used by the use of devices, the attire used, the number of participants and the musical sense. Nunomura and Tsukamoto 2009 apud Araujo and Guzzoni (2016) assure that the authors are differentiated by their positions, because there are those who consider general gymnastics as a modality, there are those who consider it as a manifestation of body culture, and there are those who consider it an activity.

The Brazilian Gymnastics Confederation, clarifies that gymnastics can be divided into six modalities of which are: artistic gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics, acrobatic gymnastics, aerobic gymnastics, gymnastics for all and acrobatic trampoline (GINASTICS, 2018).

Souza (1996, p.01) states that: “we can infer that all manifestations related to Gymnastics, Dance and Games, which do not have competitive purposes, are considered General Gymnastics”.

Gymnastics is a method of expression of body study divided into five areas: competition, presentation, fitness, body awareness and rehabilitation (LIMA et al 2015). Clarifies Araujo and Guzzoni (2016) that the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) that gymnastics is considered an “activity”, can even be seen as dance and or as games, allowing it to be competitive or not. In the same sense, says Ayoub:

[...] comprises the sphere of leisure-oriented gymnastics and includes programs of activities in the field of gymnastics (with or without devices), dance and games, according to national and cultural preferences. Events and competitions can also be part of the GG [...] it is primarily an activity within a context of enthusiasm and play, and participation is, above all, determined by the pleasure of practicing (AYOUB, 2003, p. 46-47).

According to Stanquevisch (2004), General Gymnastics (GG) can be taken “as a body demonstration, which allows interested people to participate in this activity, which does not depend on age, category or physical aspect. In addition, General Gymnastics has the important purpose of enabling socialization, as

well as improving the quality”.

## **5. Gymnastics at school**

The gymnastics at the school within Brazil began together with the first Brazilian Physical Education school, which originated on March 3, 1910 and was taught by the commander and director Captain Delphin Balancior of the French Military Mission (RAMOS, 2008).

According to Ayoub, 2013 apud Sargi et al, 2016, the contributions of general gymnastics to the means of training in Physical Education, is an efficient activity that meets the human depth which provides the recomposition of Gymnastics as a body activity. Barbosa-Rinaldi and Paoliello (2008) apud Sargi et al (2016) also add that the work with Gymnastics is a space for intervention by professionals in the area and, therefore, point out that it is necessary for them to want to work with gymnastics to be adequately trained. Costa (2016) points out that the understanding that gymnastics is a modality that only covers issues related to high performance needs to be suppressed, introducing gymnastics that enables health promotion, physical and mental well being, social interaction, among other benefits, being necessary content in school Physical Education classes, and should even be added as content in the annual planning. The authors Schiavon and Nista-Piccolo point out the applicability of gymnastics by teachers:

The lack of knowledge on how to apply Gymnastics, by teachers, is the main reason presented, showing that these professionals have difficulties in visualizing this sport beyond their competitive perspective. That is, they don't know what the contributions of learning this sport are to the motor development of their students. This issue may suggest the existence of failures in the training of Physical Education professionals, related to the knowledge of Gymnastics as a cultural phenomenon that is not limited to the competitive aspect (SCHIAVON; NISTA-PICCOLO, 2007, p. 132).

General gymnastics is an essential subject in schools, but it has not been much taught by the lack of experience of teachers, because they prefer more esteemed sports. Even though it is widespread in schools and physical education classes, gymnastics is still poorly represented as a result of some issues, such as poor understanding or comprehension, precarious resources, such as lack of materials, or even wrong teaching methods (AYOUB, 2007, apud LIMA et al, 2015). Nora, Taugen and Paim (2018), affirm that currently the gymnastics within the School Physical Education, has not been performed adequately. Many aspects contribute to this fact, such as the lack of preparation of gym teachers in the school environment, and their lack of understanding of the benefits it can provide to students. Within this context, they emphasize the importance of gymnastics at school: “The presence of Gymnastics in the school environment is important, because it stimulates reflection and helps the integration of students” (NORA, TAUGEN E PAIM, 2018, p.2).

## **6. Gymnastics in life**

The performance of gymnastics helps in several characteristics for the individual, especially in the complete development of the student, with regard to physical, psychological, intellectual and social aspects. General

Gymnastics aims to generate leisure, integration between people, awakening joy, moving to provide pleasure, physical and mental well-being at the same time (RAMOS, 2008).

Some authors corroborate the conception that general gymnastics provides numerous benefits such as the plurality of cultures of dances, folklore, and games, access to different types of materials, and the opportunity for everyone to participate, each one with his or her own creativity, which provides social coexistence, friendship, and respect (AYOUB 2004, TOLEDO 2001, BERTOLINI 2005, SANTOS 2001 apud RAMOS, 2008).

Souza (1997) apud Ramos, 2008, indicates other benefits brought by the practice of gymnastics, such as discipline, coordination, safety and control.

The authors Nora, Taugen and Paim (2018) bring the explicit positioning of the benefits brought by the practice of gymnastics. They affirm as benefits, the social interaction, the assistance in various developments such as physical, mental and cognitive. In addition, they add the improvement in the quality of life, and the interaction of the students themselves, without differences or discrimination.

Regarding general gymnastics, Menegaldo (2017) states that at the same time preserving the identity of gymnastics, values and abilities are added.

Ayoub (2003) apud Torres (2011) makes it clear that General Gymnastics can offer not only the fun and enthusiasm that the activity itself produces, but also awakens creativity, promotes playfulness and diverse interpretations of gymnastics, seeking new contents and possibilities of gymnastic expression.

## **7. Final considerations**

According to the position of the authors researched through the methodology already presented, gymnastics has not been taught in an adequate way due to several aspects, among them, the lack of preparation of teachers and their misunderstanding of the benefits it can provide to the student, and gymnastics is still poorly represented due to little understanding or comprehension, precarious resources, such as the lack of materials, or even wrong teaching methods. General gymnastics provides numerous benefits such as the opportunity for everyone to participate, as well as discipline, coordination, safety and mastery. In addition, it improves the quality of life, and the interaction of the students themselves, without differences or discrimination.

## **8. Competing Interests**

The authors declare no competing interests.

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