

A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON PHYSICAL EDUCATION OBJECTIVES IN DIFFERENT EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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Key words: objectives, secondary school, Physical Education (PE)

Abstract

The deep significance of physical education is highlighted through its contribution to the harmonious development of personality, by providing a functional balance between its components, particularly between the physical and the mental ones. The educator/trainer has to undertake two major tasks in the work of educating the young generation, namely, the development and strengthening of the students' health, as well as their harmonious physical, intellectual and moral development which represent defining features of our activity.

Physical Education aims at developing a harmonious body, at strengthening health and at cultivating physical qualities (Cretu, 1999, Jinga & Istrate, 1998).

In the value system of the society, biological health is an essential value which overlaps nature's health and humans' mental health. Constrained by this double necessity, physical education and sports is the subject of hereditary and environmental conditioning (Calin, 1996), whereas the beauty and harmony of physical exercises facilitate the formation of aesthetic qualities (Nicola, 1994).

This paper does not propose a theoretical work on physical education methodology, but a practical contribution to this issue.

School education, in our society, raises educational problems of great complexity. If in respect of general educational work in secondary education, the curricula contribute positively to the formation of the team of educators through its scientific content, in terms of the intellectual, moral, practical-applicative content, there is still a vast field of research which should to be addressed in physical education.

In this study, we have tried to highlight the modalities of organising physical education activities in line with the set objectives, the relationships formed against the background of correct acquiring of age-conditioned motor abilities, the communication between children, and some peculiarities in applying specific methods and procedures to a given content of curriculum.

The development of physical education in our country is subject to evolution and cultural development. In this particular context, **the objectives** of this paper were restricted to the following aspects:

- Systematizing pedagogical thinking in physical education and sport in Romania and other European countries;
- Discovering and emphasizing original ideas concerning the organization of physical education activities in Romania, France and Britain.

Working hypothesis

In conducting this study, we have started from the following working hypothesis: a rigorous comparative analysis of the overall objectives of physical education activity, in the secondary schools, from the European Union countries, would lead to a clearer perspective on the ideals upon which the specialists in this field will have to focus their attention.

Research methods

The main research method we have used was documentation, respectively, the study of existing publications, without claiming that we have covered everything.

The curricula obtained by strenuous efforts from France and Great Britain (countries with a great culture and civilization) were of invaluable help. We thus bring our special thanks to our colleagues who practice in these countries and agreed to support us in achieving this scientific approach.

Specialized reference materials, rich in technical and methodological theoretical sources also helped us to develop this work.

The study on physical education teaching in different European countries has resulted in studying and analyzing the Physical Education (PE) curricula in Romania, France and Britain.

Data processing and interpretation

After analyzing the PE curricula, we can say that, in Romania, there has been reached a balance between intellectual demands and psycho-motor and ludic activities.

At the intellectual level, there are two obvious tendencies:

- On the one hand, they contribute to expanding students' knowledge of basic information in the field of physiology and hygiene, as well as of physical effort;
- On the other hand, they have a direct contribution to practising physical exercise in the development of traits and intellectual qualities, namely: attention, memory, spirit of observation, imagination, and speed of thought.

At the moral level, they may lead to an effective action by means of all physical education activities. Emphasis is laid on the training of skills and habits of proper behaviour in contests and competitions, in the spirit of respect for opponents and contest partners, of decision acceptance and of labour discipline.

In **France**, each stage of schooling contributes to complete, balanced and consistent formation. In primary schools, in coping with various exercises in sports games, students explore opportunities and build their skills first.

In secondary schools, students go from preteen to teenager and know body transformations, physical and social. Physical education has the duty to help all students to acquire new information on self, on others and on the environment, and to provide new motor opportunities for establishing a positive image. Students experiencing the richness and diversity of the cultural background are led to efficiency gains, through the use of their potential in identifying problems and determining responses.

Parallel to the understanding and gradual integration of the rules, they learn to engage in an approach based on design, methods of acquisition and taking over of responsibilities.

In all school activities, the SA (sports association) contributes to the students' discovery or specialization in one or more sports or artistic activities, by granting a certificate of organization, arbitration, management and of sports reporter. Sports Association organizes meetings between students of the same school or from more schools under promotional or competitive forms. Through its initiatives and responsibilities, the sports association allows the integration into/of associative life, an element which thus favours a humanistic understanding of sports.

Physical education and sport(s) involved in the acquisition of more basic skills provide students with an environment of concrete experience.

Their contribution is found mainly in:

- Participating in French language acquiring through communication intention, fairness, thoroughness and accuracy of expressions necessary for the discipline of physical education and sport;
- Acquiring of knowledge of the organization, functioning and possibilities of the human body;
- Assimilating a need for rules, for the ability to ensure security by employing various social roles;
- Forming an autonomous learner, responsible and capable of initiative. The student learns to design and lead projects to an end, to work in teams.

Physical education and sports have as final goal the formation of a cultured, lucid, independent citizen, educated from a physical and social point of view.

We have drawn a parallel below in terms of specific objectives for physical education in Romania, France and Britain (Table 1):

CONCLUSIONS

In conducting this research we have concluded that:

In our country, in setting specific objectives, there are pursued in particular: the strengthening of children's health, the development of their harmonious physical, psycho-motor capacity and the education of positive behavioral traits in team activities.

The learning contents presented above are meant to ensure the achievement of all goals, asking the teacher to select those which can be used under the specific circumstances in which they develop their activity. These contents provide the opportunity to design individual training routes, consistent with students' choices and opportunities.

Learning activities can be replaced, supplemented or varied, in accordance with the teachers' experience and the students' potential.

Table no.1

OBJECTIVES		
ROMANIA	FRANCE	GREAT BRITAIN
<p>The student will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adopt correct reflex posture of the body at all times and act to prevent installation of postural defects; - Act independently to maintain and improve his/her physical development; - Cope with motor demands imposed by the practice of physical exercise and by daily activities; - Use appropriate technical processes and tactical actions in competitions; - Apply efficiently knowledge and skills acquired in the practice of global sporting branches, respecting the official regulations; - Observe the relationship between morphological and functional indices; - Survey the hygienic status of the sports base with its sports facilities and materials and to maintain their sanitation; - Apply techniques of self-protection and to support his mates/team members and help in carrying out actions with a high level of difficulty; - Adjust to and work in teams, according to the rules and tasks set; - Demonstrate willingness to assert themselves in an organized and objective assessment of the capacity of their own results against those of their peers. 	<p>The student will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Achieve maximum motor performance; - Obtain and maintain a performance measured in time or space, adapting to the diverse and uncertain environments; - Achieve artistic or acrobatic performances; - Be capable of leadership and individual or collective mastery; - Act in self-respect, of others and of the environment through learning rules; - Organize and assume social roles and responsibilities through the management and organization of practices and through learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Installation; - Using material; - Gathering information; - Teamwork; - Mutual assistance. - Implement the project by identifying the individual or collective action conditions, the success or the failure in order to develop an action plan and to put it to practice, by thinking logically and rigorously, by assessing the effectiveness of actions and developing perseverance. 	<p>The student will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve speed of response; - Improve speed of execution; - Develop strength; - Learn basic sports skills, and basic skills; - Describe what they have executed; - Obtain a minimum score; - Repeat gymnastics elements; - Develop strength; - Increase the ability; - Show elements of basketball; - Show elements of volleyball; - Play basketball, volleyball with simple rules; - Learn commercial skills applied

In **France**, in order to achieve educational objectives and to ensure a complete and balanced formation, the content of the physical education classes is organized around two groups of competencies/skills which interact in practice:

- *The group of competencies/skills specific to physical education and sport*, highlighting an effective motor adaptation of the student dealing with broad, culturally representative experiences;
- *The methodological and social skills group*, revealing mainly assimilation methods and instruments necessary for practice and for learning to follow rules and human relations.

In the **UK**, (Al Nahda National School for Girls), there are far fewer physical education objectives. However, physical education activity does not differ essentially from the other two countries. All conditions are provided for educating the four basic psycho-motor skills, on the one hand, and for the formation of motor skills specific to a sports branch, on the other. What is missing from training students is football and handball exercises. However, we feel obliged to mention that, in this case, the school teacher is the one who sets the objectives and the means by which he/she wishes to achieve them.