

CONCEPTIONS ABOUT PHYSICAL EDUCATION AT SCHOOLS

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Review paper

Abstract

Through last decades, several different tendencies can be registered in schools physical education in general. Some of them are logical result of World transformation as well as school itself, and some of them are generated from different roles of physical exercise. Finally, it is not possible to neglect different ways of organisational forms of nowadays physical education conduction. This article address tasks and conditions of school PE and exercise in following concepts: Biological oriented, Education through movement, Personality education through movement, Conformist sport organisation and Critical constructive movement socialization. Probably new pathways can be find in change from biological forward to social values of PE, and changes in PE teachers forward to more creative support of pupils.

Key words: physical education, tendencies, concepts

Introduction

At the end of the 80-ies of XX century new tendencies in the development of school physical education started to gather strength as a worldwide phenomenon. The accent of its purpose was displaced First tendency: This tendency is especially characteristic feature of the economically developed countries in Europe. In the foreground appeared the *emotional side* of physical education activities. Good experience of extracting pleasure of movements and psycho-physical balance of pupils is put ahead and on the first place. The trend to systematic exercising for seeking harmonious development of children and youngsters came to be a subdominant purpose of school physical education. Here we have to do some explanations.

This tendency must not be misunderstood and the result to be disorganization in physical education lessons. As purposes reflect some social necessities, in this occasion the change of physical education main purpose is necessity and is completely logical. Seeking harmonious development of young generation to a certain extent is an idealistic purpose. More or less it is product of the good theory but not of the real practice. In technology of physical education teachers sometimes cannot reach the high put purpose.

There always is something that they could not manage to fulfil though their enormous efforts and wish. Reason is in the limitations of the laws of nature to human capabilities and by the genetic data, on one side, and the material and social achievements in concrete situations, on the other hand, e.g. the material and technical foundations with the necessary equipment, allocation of physical education lessons, etc. Purpose of physical education connected with the pleasures that their main content in the face of the enough number and purposeful motor acts can bring to pupils, is much more near to reality.

To this new formulation of the school physical education purpose can be also add the *personal contentedness* of the reached achievements. There are also authors (Feingold et al., 1992, Knight et al., 1992) who stay behind the standpoint that for a pupil is beneficial even if he or she is not an active participant on the playground but only a passive spectator of the happening there. Even inactivity of this kind is healthful for the rising generation. This opinion goes to extremes and physical education teachers have to be careful with its interpretation. Second tendency: This tendency also has worldwide dimensions. As all of us know, last decades of XX century in addition to super development of electronic technologies and communications are determined as time of the informational expansion. Arising idea somewhere very quickly finds its way all around the world. The same situation we have here. Determination of purpose of school physical education now is declined to the health contributions of motor exercising.

First publications in this direction are since the 80-ies of former century (egg. Almond, 1983; Whitehead & Fox, 1983). The laid emphasis on health effects means building of *health culture* in young generation and terms like style of life, diets, nutrition, wellbeing, etc. to be parallel part of physical education at schools. E.g. in 1987 American Academy of Pediatrics gets the decision to support Physical education programmes that lessen time for motor skill education and team sports and to stand behind school programmes that secure stable and lasting habits for health directed exercising for good general disposition (Feingold, Rees & Barrette, 1992). In this attitude a debate along the school physical education content followed. In same direction is the view of specialists in Brazil (Silveira, Bohme & Myotin, 1992). In Australia along with the programme "Aussie Sports" that in year 1988 spread over 26% of the primary schools.

The number of the primary schools that supported the programme "Aussie Sports" and organized regular sports occupations for their pupils is 2040. In the state emerged other but health related physical education programmes with wide support as well (Hawkins, 1992). During the last 20 years the number of publications of authors who tried to work out theoretical concepts about physical education in mainstream (with general education) schools increased (Lyakh, 2009). They determine former and nowadays views about school physical education. These publications are each one by itself and never discussions or exchange of ideas, reference points, content and other aspects are done. Very rarely comparison between physical education in two or more than two countries in Europe is done (Richter, 2006; 2007; Lyakh, 2009). Scientists like Crum (1992; 1994), Balz (1992), Naul (2003), Richter (2006; 2007), etc., determine the existence of 3 to 5 concepts in school physical education. In this aspect as most complete is accepted to be the view of Crum. Making his analysis he determines the existence of the following 5 conceptions about the philosophy, methodology, and organization of physical education at schools.

I. Biologic oriented conception

In German literature it is known as "das biologischorientierte Konzept", in English literature it is "training conception". The main idea in this concept is that purpose of using physical exercises is the biologic adaptation of the organs and system of organism to the environment. The beginning of this concept is sought in Swedish Gymnastic System whose founder is Per Henrik Ling and is developed further by his son Hajdmar Ling (XVIII – XIX century). This system was adopted in the countries of Western Europe and South America. The initial bases of this conception underwent some modifications because of scientific findings or social changes. In spite of all, the main characteristics of the conception remained untouched. In the centre is the idea about the role of human body with special attention to the motor functions for its development. Biologic oriented conception relies on knowledge of medical and biologic cycle. Physical education programmes that accept this conception have as main purpose and task the development and raise of physical conditioning/fitness of pupils.

Attention is to the development of the components of fitness – level of agility, strength, speed, flexibility, endurance/stamina, mobility, balance, coordination. So, the bodies of pupils are put under a certain amount of stress to increase their physical capabilities. According to Hardman (2001), Pospiech (2003), etc., the task the physical fitness capacity of pupils to be increased is one of the main tasks of school physical education. Supporters of this view rely on the training effect for biological adaptation of body functions to environment. In the frame of the biologic oriented conception and as an example Crum (1992) gives the use of running in school PE lessons.

Main content here is the development of the different kinds of endurance, strength and agility. It is no matter what kind of means the PE teacher uses. It can be a long distance running, plays and games, relay-races, etc. But always the following rules have to be observed:

- Minimum duration of running has to be 10 – 15 minutes
- Pulse-rate of primary and secondary school pupils has to be somewhere around 150 beats per minute
- Exercises included in plays and games have to be with a simple structure, accessible for the greater part of the pupils and to be offered in combination with running

General conclusion is that content of this kind of the PE lessons makes the teacher to look much more like a trainer than like a teacher.

II. Education through movement conception

"Education through movement" is the English term of this conception. The German term for it is "das bildungs-theoretische-konzept Erziehung durch Bewegung". This conception is based on the ideas of the philanthropists and first of all of Guts Muths. Austrian school physical education is based on this conception for years. Movements here are considered as a means for a personal development of character, discipline, strength of spirit, social and esthetic education. There is stressed on the function to be able through movements to express your, to come in contact with the others, to compare yourself with them, etc. Motto of the conception sounds as "*Moving educate yourself*" but not "*Learn to move*". Physical education in this conception is considered to be an important and necessary component of general education of people. As a rule purpose and tasks of physical education in this occasion are connected with training of the strength of will, faith in man, greater ability for concentration, and social and intellectual development as well. In the programmes of physical education there is a lack of variety. Usually content of physical education is based on a list with exercises and games suitable for the concrete age and abilities of children and youngsters. But always is necessary the educational tasks to be conducted in a good atmosphere (Crum, 1992). Purpose of "Running" in this conception for example aims the decision of tasks like development of ability for interaction, wish to take a risk, belief in yourself, responsibility, etc. In the occasion the content is running for orientation in space, games with running, and relay races. The task of the teachers is to secure good organization and enjoyable atmosphere during the lessons. So, in the PE lessons the role of the amusement function is leading.

III. Personality education through movements conception

The term in German for this conception is "das persönlichkeitsorientierte konzept der Bewegungserziehung". The key position here is the education in motor skills.

The main idea is that the acquisition of motor skills through purposeful motor activity will lead to development of children and youngsters. The conception also seeks personal development of pupils and building of motor competences for personal orientation in nature and social environment. This conception has variants. For example its English variant relies on the ideas of Laban (1989) formed at 1848 about the *space harmony* of human body where important are (and because of this are principles): 1) Awareness of body, 2) Awareness of space, 3) Quality of effort, 4) Relationships. According to Laban human movements are nothing else but physical moving of body or its parts in space. Second is the Dutch variant of this conception. In its base are the views of Gordijn and Tamboer who look at the human movements as a dialogue between individual and the environment. In the theme "Running" according to Laban and his followers during the process of education pupils have to master terms as "space", "time", "load", etc. and their quality characteristics, e.g. freedom of performance, grace, etc. According to Gordijn mastering of running has as a purpose the achievement and keeping of a definite speed, passing through the distance for a definite time.

IV. Conformist sport socialization conception

In German the term is "das konformisierende Konzept der Sportsozialisation". In the occasion the content of conformism must be understood as adaptation to the social norms and values (Lyakh, 2009, p. 4). The purpose of the idea is "teaching through sports disciplines" (Kurz, 1977; Soll, 2000). In the conception come to the fore social prospects while exercising with its technique and tactics is only the means for participation in sports disciplines. Two are the reasons for the formation of this concept. Firstly, the development of such school programmes whose accent is on the readiness of young generation for existence in society. Secondly, the significance of the organizational forms of sport whose number increases constantly. In some countries, e. g. Germany, matters went so ahead that very often the content of the school programmes concerning physical education are designed with the active participation of representatives of the sports organizations. This concept demands adaptation of school physical education and school sport to the functioning world of sport. "Running" here is mastered as a technique, with acceleration, different starts, with participations in competitions.

V. Critical constructive movement socialization concept

The German term that covers this concept is "das kritisch konstruktive Konzept der Bewegungssozialisation". Main purpose is the mastering of technique, social, motor and intellectual competences by the pupils. These competences will be needed by them for their future participation in different forms of motor/sports activities.

This conception relies on the critical theoretical views of symbolical interactionism, humanistic psychology, cognitive psychology, and the general theories of education (Lyakh, 2009, p. 5). Building in pupils of motor, social and intellectual competences will be necessary for their lifelong participation in different forms of motor activity (Crum, 1994, p. 527). The followers of this conception pay more attention to the meaningful real practice and utility of physical exercising. As former ones this conception also supports the idea of the social meaningfulness of physical education. But here the role of the social meaningfulness is with wider content. In process of education pupils not only do exercising according to the offered to them motor task but they alone try to create new motor tasks. Balance between development of abilities for adaptation to society and development of individual is sought. In practice this means that pupils have to master not only the technique and tactics of exercises, the theoretic and methodological knowledge, etc., but also to know and use values from the sphere of the emotions and intelligence, such as happiness, health, relaxation, etc. Decision of problem situations and influence on intellectual and reflexive qualities of pupils during lessons, plays, dances, and other forms of physical activity are stimulated. Programme content of physical education in relation to critical constructive movement socialization concept is systematized in themes whose mastering is well methodologically described. "Running" as theme is mastered firstly as a correct technique but later on are recommended different variants of running, so that the senses of pupils to be developed. At the end conditions for rationalization and discussion are established. On table 1 in short can be seen some of the main characteristics of the 5 conceptions about school physical education, defined by Crum (1992; 1994).

Table 1. Main characteristics of school physical education conceptions

<i>Biologic oriented conception</i>
Adaptation of organism to environment. Relying on medical and biological sciences. Main purpose is raise of physical conditioning – agility, strength, speed, flexibility, endurance, coordination, balance, etc.
<i>Education through movements conception</i>
Movements are means for development. You express yourself through movements and come in contact with others. A step forward to social and intellectual development is done. Lack of variety in school PE programmes. Good supporting atmosphere in lessons is necessary.
<i>Personality education through movements</i>
Key position has the purposeful acquisition of motor skills. Building of motor competences will help for the personal orientation in nature or social environment. This conception has two variants.

Conformist sport socialization conception

Content of conformist is understood as adaptation to social norms and values. Teaching is through sports disciplines. Functions of world sport are observed.

Critical constructive movement socialization

Overall mastering of motor (technique and tactics), social and intellectual competences is observed. Seeks lifelong participation in different forms of motor activities. Creativity of pupils in designing new motor tasks is stimulated.

Conclusion

As general conclusion concerning the different conceptions about physical education in schools we can consider the following points: 1. Theoretical conceptions in school physical education follow the necessities of the young generation. In this aspect in retrospective plan we find out development and change from biological to social important values that obligatory PE in schools can have, and 2. To all tendencies and changes school PE teachers have to be enough flexible, so that PE exercising to be creative and helpful for their pupils.

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KONCEPCIJE O TJELESNOM ODGOJU U ŠKOLAMA

Sažetak

Zadnjih desetljeća moguće je primjetiti nekoliko različitih tendencija općenito u školskom tjelesnom odgoju. Neki od njih su logični rezultat promjena u Svijetu baš kao i u školi kao takvoj, a neki od njih su generirani iz različite uloge tjelesnog vježbanja. Konačno, nije moguće zanemariti ni različite načine organizacijskih oblika današnjice u provedbi tjelesnog odgoja. Ovaj članka adresira zadatke i uvjete školskog tjelesnog odgoja u slijedećim konceptima: Biološki usmjereni, Edukacija kroz kretanje, Osobna edukacija kroz kretanje, Konformističke sportske organizacije i Kritična konstruktivna socijalizacija kretanjem. Vjerojatno se novi putovi mogu pronaći u promjeni od biološkim prema sociološkim vrijednostima tjelesnog odgoja, kao i u promjenama učitelja tjelesnog odgoja prema kreativnijoj podršci učenicima.

Ključne riječi: tjelesni odgoj, tendencije, koncepti

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