

ERD 2016 : Education, Reflection, Development, Fourth Edition

## The Sportivization Of The Physical Education Classes

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### Abstract

<http://dx.doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2016.12.51>

Physical Education and the sporting movement in Romania form a social mechanism that decided the behaviour related to the ideals of the times. The results in sporting competitions during “the cold war”, equivalent to the second half of the 20th century become emblematic expressions of the superiority and the strength of the states. The experience shows that this trend triggered the excessive sportivization of the Physical Education classes. The purpose of the terminological explanations consists in revealing the finality and the contradiction born actually between the two activities: Physical Education aims to the quality of life while Sport targets the exacerbation of the aptitudes. The terminological confusion created by putting together the two terms causes dissatisfaction to one or another of the sides involved. The content of the activities and the finality of the instructive-educational process in Instruction and Sport acquire a meaning when respecting the proposals of the European Union about these activities.

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**Keywords:** Physical education; objective; sport; coherence.

### 1. Introduction

The approach comes from the will to understand the mechanism in the Physical Education and Sport system which determine medical exemption for the Physical Education class, weak participation and dissatisfaction with the altering of the general rating from the part of the students and their parents because of the marks that were scored.



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According to the theory of reaction, dissatisfaction also appears among the teachers and those that are involved in the school activity.

Analysing this reveals another category of disputes and dissatisfaction of the teachers that participate to the national competition The National Olympics of the Sports in School or the Gymnasium Olympics activities included in the official schools schedule.

In order to understand the signification of the terms and the determined meaning of human actions, there are a few terminological explanations to be clarified, the occurred confusions and administrative measures which assure the coherence of educational and sporting politics are to be revealed. For this purpose, I made a study based on the participatory observation within a frame of over grade inspections, we made questionnaires and interviews about this issue with teachers in this field and persons whose activity is in sports or connected branches and a series of interviews with the guests of the television program called *Someș Sport* as moderator. We organized a workshop called “The Sporting Game as Means of the Physical Education” at the Sport and Physical Education Faculty on October 10, 2014 when the participants answered a questionnaire about this issue.

During the initial stage of the observations, I realized that the perception on the concepts of Physical Education and Sports in various social-political contexts created cognitive dissonances which resulted in incoherence concerning the designation of the content of the activities, lack of vision at a decisional and executive level in this field.

The words “Physical Education” and “Sport” are often connected and express sometimes identical or very similar matters. For instance: 'we make sport', 'we go to sport', and so on. In other context, these terms have restricted or different meanings. For example: 'I go to training'.

A uniformity of the terms is impossible because of the meanings acquired through used paradigms, of inaccurate translations and also because of certain people's persistence to impose their individual cultural assets.

## **2. Physical Education and Sport paradigms**

### *2.1. Terminological Explanations*

The terminological or conceptual explanations are intended to establish a common referential frame for the term 'Physical Education' and the word 'sport'.

**Education** (Chelcea S., Iluț P., 2003) represents:

- a complex psycho-social activity projected at the level of pedagogic finalities.
- by means of structured actions at the level of the correlation subject-object (educator-educated), it concerns the permanent forming and development of the human personality as well as the orientation towards education.

The taxonomy of education presents multiple examples as: Physical, Civic, Military, Moral, Political, Religious and other kinds of Education.

Historically, various forms of education took the character conditioned by the political, social, economic, military and other context.

## Sport

Kirişescu C. (1943) offers this definition for Sport: 'Sport is game connected to a competitive struggle, to win over space or over a certain natural barrier. Practicing sports is connected to the term record which means to get a better performance than the previous one'.

The term "sport" is explained in The Concise Encyclopaedic Dictionary (Bucharest, 1978) as:

1. A physical activity which implies methodical training, respecting certain rules and a certain discipline being based on competitive element and aiming acquiring of performance.

2. Each of the forms regulated by this activity (for instance Athletics, Swimming, Handball and so on)

3. An aggregate of physical exercises and games, practiced methodically, having as a purpose to form and perfect certain **mobility and moral qualities** (courage, perseverance, decision, and so on). It's practiced at school to fulfil personality of children and youth and later, for maintaining and increasing the body capacity to resist efforts.

Through a refined definition by professor dr. Nicu Alexie (2005), sport is 'the impetuous activity of the 20th century' and adds: 'It's only arming, especially arming with nuclear weapons, the fight to conquer the Space and acquiring the ideological and political supremacy of the world surpass the **material and emotional** investment that sports received during the previous century. Sport was its religion. After the war, there was an informational explosion resulted from watching and researching sports. It had to be known and capitalized, at least at its core. They exceed, for certain, those made in order to fight poverty and cancer. My country had already tasted the champagne of the international success in sports. It's an intoxicating drunkenness that takes you over and acts like a drug, you can't go back, you become addicted.

In terminology and reality, the term Physical Education and Sport still persists in former socialist countries and the authority refers to it through legislation:

- The Romanian Constitution, art. 45, stipulates that 'the public authorities guarantee the necessary conditions that will allow youth to participate in political, social, economic and sporting life of the nation
- The Law of Education 84/July 24th, 1995 stipulates at point f of art. 4 – (1): Education aims to cultivate the human personality by:
  - Harmonious development of the individual through Physical Education
  - Hygienic-sanitary education
  - Practicing sports
- The Law of Physical Education and Sport 69/2000 stipulates at art. 2 (1): Physical Education and Sport are activities of national interest supported by the state. Practicing Physical Education and Sport is a personal right with no discrimination, guaranteed by the state.

### 2.2. The Objectives of Physical Education and Sport in Romania

The targets of Physical Education in post-war specialized institutions continued until this day are as follows (The State Gazette 174/March 19, 2012):

1. Maintaining optimal health;

2. Favouring growth process and harmonious body development;
3. Development of the ability to move through moving skills and optimization of the ability to move;
4. Balanced development of personal aspects: cognitive, emotional and volitional;
5. Cultivation of the habit for systematic physical training;
6. Cultivation of integration ability and action in a team;
7. Acquiring of basic knowledge characteristic to the field of Physical Education and Sport;

One of the purposes associated with Physical Education is practicing physical exercise independently with various psycho-social functions.

Comparing the objectives of the Physical Education with those of Sport, we see the differences. We think that in this case, the content of the classes should be also be different.

### **Objectives of the Physical Education As Formulated By the European Union**

In the European Union, the concern for health supposes orientations to the following objectives:

1. Decreasing the risk of heart diseases, diabetes type 2, colon cancer, osteoporosis;
2. Maintaining and growth in force, flexibility, endurance and bone density;
3. Reducing the risk of aged people to fall down;
4. Improving mental and spiritual health, easing depression and anxiety, improve social relationships and self-esteem;
5. Support the maintenance or weight loss and increase muscle mass (P. Edwards and Tsouros A. 2006);

### **Confusion in Setting Targets**

Teachers compare the quality of the Physical Education classes to students' results in competitions.

Students' evaluation according to tests and control rating has, as an end, the achievement of specific competitive hierarchies, altering the quality of life through a mechanism of segregation: good vs. weak, chosen vs. not chosen, representative vs. unimportant.

The participation of rural and urban teams as well as professional athletes alters the principle of equal opportunities.

The Regulation of the National School Sports Olympics (ONSS 2007) maintains this mechanism through the following provisions:

Art. 44: Sporting competitions in the National School Sports Olympics are regarded as performance.

Art. 50: Organizing and operating school sports competitions, as well as participating to them, are considered when ascertaining the salary or the excellence grade. These are also taken in consideration when evaluating the teaching institutions and school inspectorates.

The consequences of the sportivization of the classes are:

- increased school absenteeism especially for sedentary, overweight children who cannot get good marks according to ratings;
- confusion in Physical Education teacher's targets;

- the alteration of evaluation ethics for teachers in schools who are ranked through the prism of the work made by specialized trainers in specialized institutions;

In the social-economic and political context of the high-achievements educational system based on personal meditations, the critical study of the consequences in Physical Education and Sport as it results from the questionnaires made during the workshop in 2014 proves its deficiencies (Mureşan A., 2014).

The Committee of the Ministers in the European Union as in the forum named „World Health Forum 1994” recommend to the governments in the member states the direction to follow: to base the principles of national sports and, possibly, any relevant legislation on the European Sports Charter; to take measures to ensure a wide distribution of the European Sports Charter.

I propose to reflect and act if the institutional cleavage on Physical Education and Sport would be the way within the European vision of improving the quality of life (The European Sports Charter, 2011).

As evidence of the dissociation between Physical Education and Sports, the projects with European funding do not include sports.

The participating observations, the discussions with more than 55 teachers and teaching staff in Physical Education prove the fact that Physical Education teachers refer to their professional performance only to sport results as ranking in competitions or to the participation of their own students in various competitions. Everything is reduced to competition. The mechanism generating this point of view is the fact that professional recognition and excellence grades are acquired through such criteria.

The commentaries made by Physical Education teachers do not report to the functional quality of various systems, to health condition, to the psycho-somatic situation of the students.

We consider that students' education in the field of Physical Education would become useful through their awareness about quality of life respectively health condition, the recommendations made by WHO about the harmonious relation between height and weight, the heart and breath frequencies in effort or rest, recovery after effort, healthy food, hygiene and so on, through evaluation methods included in the programme of this discipline.

The moral, civic and behaviour values, followed as didactic goals, are necessary for cultivating students' personality and character in the spirit of tolerance and mutual respect. On the contrary, the emphasis is on obtaining results in control tests.

East European countries in the field of Physical Education in the years 1950 and 1960 were concerned with somatic development, the thoracic perimeter inhaling and exhaling, improving the moving ability through: throwing oina or tennis ball while standing, vertical jumping, abdominal muscle strength, back muscle strength, push-ups, traction, mobility of the hip-femoral, running speed on 20 meters, skill, running endurance. Even then, researchers in East Germany were busy with the individualization of the effort and creative skills of the means proposed by teachers and students' involvement in Physical Education process by setting their own goals. Also, persons with disabilities and health problems were benefiting of special programs according to the disorders and were applied by specialized teachers.

These concerns were then assumed by the other countries of the socialist system.

After the events of 1989, one can notice the changes determined by politics and administration in a different social context that was assimilated with difficulty.

Today, our consumer society focuses on promoting and compensating individuals with a high production capacity. In conditions of fierce competition in the labour market, resistance to physical and psychological stress becomes an important issue on the agenda of the employee and the employer. A goal associated with Physical Education is the independent practice of physical exercises in order to ensure health condition and quality of life in current technological conditions - the stress caused by globalizing consumerist society.

The concept of 'quality of life', according to a definition given by WHO (1994), is the perception that an individual acquires regarding his/her existence, in the cultural context and the value system in which he/she lives, in relation to the objectives, expectations, rules and his/her concerns.

World Health Organization, WHO (1994, 1996) identified six areas that describe key aspects of the concept of quality of life in a cross-cultural perspective: a physical area (energy, fatigue), a psychological area (feeling positive), degree of independence (mobility), social relationships (social support), social context (the ability to get medical care), beliefs and personal faith (the meaning of life).

Courage, loyalty, bravery, discipline and honour meant to be cultivated in Physical Education and sports games become a priority for achieving the sporting culture of the school tradition.

In the European developed countries the two activities are distinct through content, organization and functionality. The Physical Education faculties and the trainers schools are different institutions and students' competitions get other meanings than in our country. The Romanian system was influenced by the vision of certain leaders of the Physical Education trend impressed at the Berlin Olympics in 1936 by the size, the essence and the message for the life and history of the twentieth century.

The specific historical period of "cold war" in the second half of the twentieth century was characterized by the political interest of the time to prepare young people for a future military confrontation (Henri Serandour, 2003). Physical Education and Sport, through specific objectives, were following to achieve this lofty goal. The results of sport competitions turned into symbolic expressions of superiority and strength of these countries. The socialist states, as well as a few capitalist countries were investing a lot in sports. Highlighting valuable athletes was a consequence of the policy that ensured physical vigour of nations. This vision led to the sportivization of Physical Education classes, namely to teachers and pupils relating their activity to the goal of performance in sports. The teaching process is one of a bilateral character - both teachers and students act for the same goal. This requires a synergy of actions under an accepted vision.

### *2.3. The Sport Paradigm in Romania*

Sport Federation that coordinate together with the Ministry Of Education the activity in school and universities sports clubs decided about two objectives of distinct activities by age categories: identifying talent and designating champions by category.

In Western European countries, the Physical Education faculties have defined goals which are different of those in training schools. The curriculum content is determined by pursued goals and objectives.

The performance in sports and the selection of talented individuals is attributed to specialized institutions, which have different regime. Sports and performance sports, especially, aim to discover and prepare individuals that have a gift for activities and professions which require a high level of physical abilities.

Sport becomes a private business or a public-private partnership.

Performance oriented sports in schools are assured through the activity of school or private sport clubs and through classes and schools specialized in sports and the evaluation has specific features established together with specialized Federations and Paralympics National Committees.

The training and performance targets of the trainers aim at excellence in sports on age categories.

Testing and trying human limits lead to risk. Fierce competition is maintained by the wish to change athletes' social status, by the interests of the companies that manufacture sport materials, by the bet houses, the show biz in sports, by the technological competition and so on. These practices are specific to companies that pursue profit.

The Committee of Ministers of the European Union (2011) recommends to the governments of its members the following:

- a) to establish the national principles in sports and, possibly, any relevant legislation on the European Sports Charter, as it is presented in the annex of the present recommendation;
- b) to invite national sports organizations to take into account of the principles set out in the European Sports Charter, while formulating their own principles;
- c) to take measures in order to ensure a wide distribution of the European Sports Charter;

We can say that this orientation triggers the sportivization of the Physical Education classes.

The Regulation of the School Sports National Olympiad (ONSS 2007) maintain this mechanism through the following provisions:

- Art. 44. The sport competitions in the frame of the School Sports National Olympiad are considered performance activities;
- Art. 50. The organizing and the conducting of school sports competitions, as well as the participation in these competitions are accounted for wage/excellence gratification by specialist teachers, instructors, schoolmasters who prepared the teams or the students. They are also taken into account when evaluating schools and school inspectorates.

Analysing critically the articles 44 and 50, we may notice that the Physical Education teacher performs an activity which is specific for performance units and which becomes criteria for obtaining the excellence grade. This requirement leads to dissatisfaction for both the students and the teachers. Once a sports game is designated 15 to 20 minutes in sixteen hours of one or maybe two quarters, students' performances cannot achieve the level of performance in assumed specialized units - vocational schools having a sports program.

Likewise, the participation of the teams in rural and urban areas as well as performance sportsmen registered in sports schools clubs or non-governmental institutions alter the principle of equal opportunities.

Teachers that have performance athletes in their teams are not evaluated for their work but for the work of the trainers in performance units. The emphasized sportivization of the classes activate a

mechanism of segregation: good – bad; selected – not selected; representing – useless. The fact that only the very few, the winners fall between the guidelines which represent the quality of life. The others, the majority are losers. The mechanism that was intended as incentive turns out into an exclusivist one.

The evaluation of the students in Physical Education and Sport classes through tests and control norms has, as a consequence, competition-like hierarchies occur. From this perspective, marks in Physical Education are a demotivating factor for sedentary, overweight or obese children, victims of the current lifestyle and alimentation. The results are demotivation, absenteeism, parents' dissatisfaction and medical exemptions and so on.

According to the methodological requirements, the acquirement of the objectives of the Physical Education are determined by the participation of the students, the content of the lessons, the methods and the means that are used, the evaluation proceedings as an operational feed-back in perspective inside a frame of a unitary vision.

The evaluation proceedings of the progress made by the students on the stated objectives respect the principle of fidelity and validity and often become factors of intrinsic motivation.

At university level, the objectives of Physical Education and Sport education were based on achieving results in sports: the technical quality of the performance, tactical success and the result in the competition. The educational aspect of training the trainers are in the background. The mechanisms of building a personality and a character, students' education in humanistic spirit are not to be explicitly found in the Curriculum, there are no ways to express the evaluation of the complex objectives of education.

Demotivation of the staff is due largely to the budgets granted for education. We remind that the great reform of the Romanian Education initiated by Spiru Haret was based on 14 – 16 and 12 % of the GDP.

### **3. Conclusions**

1. Students' evaluation criteria at classes are based upon fulfilment of anachronistic control norms and fits in a small amount with objectives that were formulated in agreement with the European Community. The Physical Education teacher accomplishes an activity which is specific to performance sports units and this becomes the criteria to get the excellence grade. This requirement causes discontent among students and teachers as well.
2. Educational objectives are not clearly oriented towards the needs of the community: acquiring the methodology of training and adapting it to the environment as required by objectives; creating trainers; creating personalities and researchers in interdisciplinary areas; fitting the vision with the European trends.

3. Emphasized sportivization of the classes activates a mechanism of segregation: good vs. weak, chosen vs. not chosen, representative vs. unimportant. It reveals that only the very few, the winners, fall between the indicators that define the quality of life. The others, the majority, are losers. The mechanism, that was meant to be incentive, turns into an exclusive one.
4. The mechanisms that build personality and character, the education of the students in humanistic spirit are not to be found explicitly in activities; ways to evaluate complex objectives of education find no expression. Orientation towards content prevails over orientation towards skills.
5. From the point of view of investing in people, that is health and knowledge, the European projects do not regard performance in sports. According to the objectives of Physical Education in developed European countries may be enclosed in the categories health and social. These are prerequisites for which the European Union adopted the Bologna System in Education, thus assigning the way to be followed.
6. The institutional cleavage assumes that both Physical Education and Sport have clearly defined and determined areas by consistent methods and means of intervention and evaluation methods that are specific to each of them. Education implies outsourcing concepts and reporting individuals for their insights and sports competition involves reporting to others.
7. The vision of the European and international institutions (WHO, EU, the European Council, UNESCO) shows us, bringing arguments, the direction to follow.
8. The stakes of the Reform in Education, transforming informative education into a formative one continues to remain an interesting goal. Education underfunding is a destructive mechanism with multiple effects.

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(ORDIN nr. 3.462 din 6 martie 2012 privind aprobarea Metodologiei organizării și desfășurării activităților de educație fizică și sport în învățământul preuniversitar EMITENT: MINISTERUL EDUCATIEI, CERCETAR-II, TINERETULUI SI SPORTULUI PUBLICAT: MONITORUL OFICIAL nr. 174 din 19 martie 2012)

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