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ORIGINAL RESEARCH

**THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF THEORETICAL PREPARATION ON
“PHYSICAL EDUCATION FOR HIGHSCHOOL STUDENTS**

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Introduction:

According to the pre-university curriculum, one of the criteria to assess the level of the subject's acquisition is the quality of the theoretical knowledge. In the basic organizing documents of school physical education, there were and still are stipulated the exact requests regarding the necessary theoretical knowledge of students on various education levels. According to these documents, the theoretical knowledge was *general knowledge*. To the general knowledge, there are added those pertaining to the basic information of the given subject, information about the means and methods of physical education, information from the domain of prophylactic physical education, etc. Special knowledge is that representing the students' knowledge from various sports tests provided by the school curriculum, such as the sporting games (volleyball, basketball, football, handball), athletics (running, jumping, throwing) and gymnastics (apparatus and floor exercises). It is here that the means and methods applied in acquiring the compartments listed above are attributed. In the special knowledge category there is also the knowledge related to the means, the forms and the methods to develop the basic motor qualities (force, speed, flexibility, resistance, skills), as well as the procedures for evaluating them.

Nevertheless, regardless of the fact that in the physical education organizing normative documents, highschool included, it is provided that theoretical knowledge should be acquired, still there is no actual presentation of the specific requirements and the assessment criteria for the level of acquisition. No document specifies the ways to evaluate the volume and quality of acquiring the theoretical knowledge, which is why we are going to present here a detailed analysis of the level of acquisition of theoretical knowledge for the “Physical Education” subject by highschool students after applying the teaching –learning –evaluation technique on the experiment group.

Materials and methods:

The research was conducted over 2000 – 2006 in three stages. In order to accomplish the objectives of the research, we used the following: the theoretical analysis and specialty data generalization, sociologic survey (the questionnaire, the interview, and discussions), the pedagogic observation, motor tests, the pedagogic experiment, the mathematic-statistic method of data processing and interpretation, the graphic method and the tabular method.

Results and discussions:

The level of acquisition of the theoretical knowledge was assessed on two groups: general knowledge and special knowledge.

We are going to analyze the results of acquiring the theoretical knowledge by the highschool students included in the pedagogical experiment according to the two basic groups defined above.

Therefore, according to the research carried among the students, the first ten subjects were dedicated to appreciating the *general* theoretical knowledge. The inquiry revealed that every subject, depending on its complexity degree, was noted with one or two points.

The first five questions were noted with one point as they had only one correct answer option, while the following five, were given two points each as they had two correct answer options.

The questionnaire had the first five subjects noted based on the objective indexes with one point for the correct answer option.

On the first subject regarding the correct indication of the “physical education” notion, the students of the experimental group had 76 correct answers, which represent 77.5% of the total number of students. Only 22 students – 22.5% indicated an incorrect answer. In the witness group the number of students indicating the correct answer was 47 of the total 106 undergoing the experiment (44.3%), while the incorrect answer was indicated by 59 students, which amounts to more than half of the group (55.7%). Therefore, the students of the experimental group who had undergone a practical program of measures focused on acquiring the theoretical knowledge of the “Physical Education” subject, demonstrated superior results compared with the witness group students, where the same thing happened occasionally, without having their level of acquisition tested.

The second subject was dedicated to the knowledge of the students referring to the recreational physical education culture, where they had to check one of the proposed answer options. The experimental group students chose 84.7% correct answers while the witness group only 60.6%. The incorrect answers of the experimental group rose to 15.3%, whereas the witness group had 39.6%.

The third subject concentrated on the students’ understanding of physical perfecting as a part of the physical culture. Analyzing the results of the experimental group, there can be noted that there were 73.3% correct and 26.5% incorrect options for the definition of “physical perfecting”. The witness group had equal proportions of correct and incorrect answers: 50% and 50%. This case proved as well that the experimental group is better than the witness group, as the former was better documented in this regard than the latter.

The following subject (the fourth) focused on physical exercise as a basic means of physical education. The students had to point to one of the answer options proposed as definitions. Just as in the preceding cases, the students of the experimental group were better positioned with 98 students (64.3%) giving correct answers, and 35.7% who did not solve the task at hand. For the witness group, this was one of the most difficult subjects, giving only 38.7% correct answers and 61.3% incorrect ones.

The fifth subject with objective marking option (with only one correct answering option) was the definition of the motor activities. On this subject, 75.55 of the experimental group chose correct answers, whereas less than half (46.2%) of the witness group did so. The errors of the experimental group rose to 24.5% with the former and 53.8% with the latter.

Therefore, by analyzing the results of the theoretical knowledge acquisition over the first five subjects, there can be noted a positive dynamics of the experimental group over the witness group, which proved that the practical experimental program was quite effective and the students benefited from it by considerably increasing their knowledge volume and quality.

As mentioned above, the second part of the subjects for assessing the theoretical knowledge acquisition level was evaluated with semi-objective and subjective indexes – with two or more correct answer options and they required for the student to describe the notion or definition with a specific text. In order to have a better possibility to compare and analyze the results, the answers to subjects 6-10 were assessed with “correct” for two correct answers, “partially correct” for just one correct answer and “incorrect” for no correct answer. For the subjects with written answers, the marks were graded as follows: “correct” = 75-100% of the answer is correct; “partially correct” = 50-75% of the answer is correct and “incorrect” = less than 50% is correct.

Choosing the correct answer options in defining the motor qualities (subject 6), the experimental group is clearly stands out as 64.3% of the students were given “correct”, 21.4% - “partially correct” and only 14.3% indicated no correct answer. The witness group has results much below those of the former group, with only 34.4% correct answers in defining the motor qualities, 21.7% - “partially correct” and 44.3% did not manage to indicate at least one valid answer.

The approximately same trend is to be noted in the case of the seventh subject, where the students had to point to the correct notions of a “healthy way of living”. In the case of the experimental group, 72.4% of the students mentioned the “correct” notions of a “healthy way of living”, 18.4% of the students indicated “partially correct” answers and just 9.2% gave “incorrect” answers. The witness group had uniformly spread answer groups: 38.7% “correct”, 32.1% “partially correct” and 29.1% “incorrect” solutions.

Subject 9 of the general theoretical knowledge domain focused on finding the valid notion of “physical exercise technique”. There were relatively good results from the experimental group where 62.2% of the total students were given “correct” marks, 14.4% - one valid answer and 23.5% - “incorrect”. In the case of the witness group, the “correct” answers rate drops dramatically to 44.3%, while the “partially correct” and the “incorrect rates rise to 31.2% and 24.5%, respectively.

The last subject (the tenth) concentrating on the appreciation of theoretical knowledge was a little more complex for both groups and it focused on the notion of tactics in the field of physical culture. The students of the experimental group gave 57.1% valid answers for the tactics notion, 12.3% “partially correct” and 30.6% “incorrect ones”. There must be mentioned the fact that this is the lowest point that both the experimental and the witness groups had reached. The students of the witness group were respectively marked with 36.8% “correct”, 43.4% “partially correct” and 19.8% “incorrect”.

By analyzing the results of the acquisition of the general theoretical knowledge by highschool students, we must mention that they have significantly improved the results, on both volume and quality – results that were motivated by the value brought by the method proposed by the pedagogical experiment. In the witness group where the theoretical knowledge was only occasionally taught, without accent on their role and necessity for the human activity, to ensure a better understanding thereof, the results were, obviously, below those of the experimental group students.

Conclusions:

Considering the results of the theoretical knowledge acquisition in the field of physical education and sports by high school students, there must be mentioned the fact that applying the sports theoretical contests, theoretical lessons, and individual theoretical study of the domain – in the practice of the school physical education, had an essential influence over the level of their theoretical training. The least studied sector, according to the results of the pedagogical experiment, is that of the antic and modern Olympic Movement. This sector is very little approached both within and outside school physical education. The only source of information remains the mass-media: the radio and TV shows, the various national and international sports contests. Therefore, all this imposes for a new methodological attitude regarding school physical education, especially in the context of the Olympic Movement.

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